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KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

The MacDonell Lectures for 1921 Delivered before Scarritt Bible and Training School

WHEN GOD AND MAN MEET

WILLIAM J. YOUNG, D.D.

The MacDonell Lectures

The Woman's Missionary Council of the Methodist Church, South, in annual session, April, 1919, established a lecture course to be known as the MacDonell Lectures, in honor of Mrs. Robert W. MacDonell, who rendered distinguished service in the field of home missions during a period of twenty-five years of official connection with the Woman's Home Missionary Society, the Woman's Missionary Council and the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

According to the terms of the Lectureship the fund provided by the Home Department of the Woman's Missionary Council "shall be used each year to engage the services of a godly man or woman of wide experience, recognized ability and spiritual power, who shall give a series of lectures to the students of the Scarritt Bible and Training School. The aim of the course shall be the enrichment and deepening of the spiritual life of the students in the Training School and other workers connected with the Council. A call to life service as an aim in these lectures is not to be overlooked."

The first series of MacDonell Lectures was given in the spring of 1920, by Rev. Oswald Eugene Brown, D.D., of the School of Religion, Vanderbilt University, and was published under the title, "The Christianization of American Life." The second series was delivered by Rev. Wm. J. Young, D.D., Professor of Missions, Emory University, under the general theme, "The Supreme Hour of the Supreme Quest of the Soul." The splendid message is now, in the present volume, given to the Church at large, with the prayer that it may be abundantly used to stimulate and guide the Church in the Supreme Quest.

WHEN GOD AND MAN MEET

The Supreme Hour of
The Supreme Quest of the Soul

BY

WILLIAM J. YOUNG, D.D.

PROFESSOR OF MISSIONS, EMORY UNIVERSITY

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FOREWORD

In the summer of 1920 the author was invited to conduct the devotional hour at noon each day during the two weeks of the school for the training of Sunday School teachers, which is held every year at Junaluska, North Carolina. The addresses delivered on that occasion were very graciously received, and led to the request that, using the thoughts at that time presented, he deliver the MacDonell lectures at the Scarritt School of Missions in Kansas City, and the same lectures on the Bennett-Gibson foundation to the missionaries and others in Brazil. They were at both places blessed, far beyond the expectation of the lecturer, to the profit of the hearers.

The native Brazilians expressed a desire to have the lectures in the Portuguese language. They have been translated by a competent scholar, and will be published simultaneously in the United States and in Brazil.

The author sincerely prays that the lectures may be a blessing to larger audiences in both lands, and may quicken the devotional life of many, and make the way plain into the presence of God.

W. J. Young.

Emory University, Georgia.

CONTENTS

LECTURE		PAGE
I	THE QUEST AND THE HOUR	11
II	THE MUTUAL SURRENDER: GOD AND OURSELVES	59
III	THE HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP	103
IV	THE APPOINTED HOURS AND THE APPOINTED PLACES	145
V	THE JOYS OF WORSHIP	191
VI	THE CALL TO SPECIAL SERVICE IN THE HOURS OF WORSHIP	237

Lecture I
THE QUEST AND THE HOUR

WHEN GOD AND MAN MEET

Lecture I

THE QUEST AND THE HOUR

DURING the few days we spend together, I shall ask you to meditate with me upon *The Supreme Hour of the Supreme Quest of the Soul.* While we meditate upon this theme, let us pray that the God whom we seek may make himself known to us more richly than before.

The subject of the present lecture is *The Quest and the Hour.*

The quest of which I speak is the quest for God. We are all searchers after the mysteries which lie hidden behind the passing show. We cannot help ourselves. For this we were made. The supreme search is for God, the cause, the final cause of all things, God in whom we and all things and beings else live and move and have their being. The mysteries are only another name for God, before we have found him, and even after we have found him, for our discovery of him is ever an enlarging discovery here, and will no doubt be equally so in the other world.

There are hours in all lives when it would be a

joy to surrender every knowledge, every possession if only we might see God by such surrender. The scene of the wrestling Jacob has been repeated thousands of times. The deepest cry of Job's heart when his anguish was the greatest, is found in those truly pathetic words, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him! That I might come even unto his seat!" The disciples, who, by their constant fellowship, had found the best in themselves aroused under the shadow of the Cross, presented as their supreme petition, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us." It is God we want. It is God we must have. It is God we must know.

The supreme hour of this quest is the hour of worship. This is the hour which we have set apart for this very purpose. Elsewhere and at other times incidentally and impliedly we may be seeking God, but now all else is incidental and indeed auxiliary to this. Indeed the soul who has often found God before, may in these holiest moments have all else but God vanish from his life and thought.

I do not forget how often these hours of worship mean nothing, perhaps at times to the best of men. Not infrequently we go through them as we do other things which have become to us a fixed habit. We feel uncomfortable if we do not discharge such duties, but further than this they have no meaning to us. Or our acts of worship partake of the nature of fetichism or magic. They degenerate into the lowest form of the *ex opere operato* theory of the Romanist. The primitive man, with all his primitive superstitions, it

may be quite unconsciously to ourselves, once more asserts himself in us. Perhaps we are afraid not to worship. To many God has become a jealous God in the sense that he demands of us such flattery as an oriental monarch of the olden days demanded. Then too, it is entirely possible for us to imagine we are engaged in sincere worship, because we use the phrases which have become common in prayer and praise.

Nevertheless it remains true that worship is the supreme act of the supreme hour of life. We may think of the failure to make proper use of such an extraordinary opportunity as dishonoring to God and withal very displeasing. We may think of possible consequences like those which ever flow from the trifling with the fundamental facts of God's universe. But we may remember and should not forget the certain damage to our character, the stripping from ourselves of the power of God, the robbing of ourselves of the wondrous peace found nowhere except in the conscious presence of God. How many can say as they sit in the churches of our land on the Lord's Day with the same thrill with which Jacob said it, "This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven"?

The danger of losing the whole value of these most blessed of privileges is peculiarly great with those who stand related in any official way to any sort of public worship, or who feel it to be, just because of the position they occupy, a duty to observe stated hours or methods of worship. We may handle sacred things

and perform sacred acts, until they all become entirely commonplace, meaning no more than the most common things of daily life. But, on the other hand, there can be no higher honor, no loftier privilege, than the God-given ability to come constantly and fully into communion with God, and at the same time to lead others into this experience. The sermon may be eloquent and inspiring, while the worship is at the same time the merest form. It is not uncommon, however, for men whose words are in themselves more than prosaic, so to lead the flock in prayer and praise and the reading of the Word, that the people feel all the while that they have met God face to face, and still find him as they go to their business or the other duties of life with their fatigue and monotony.

All life is a search for God. The man of immense wealth still seeks for more because he is seeking—vainly enough indeed—to find himself at last the owner of an infinite treasure. In the same spirit and with the same largely unconscious aim Alexander and Cæsar and Kaiser Wilhelm sought to govern the world. In music and poetry and art their faithful devotees are striving for the perfect harmony, the perfect verse, the ideal beauty. It is very far from all the truth to say:

> "I wonder if ever a song was sung
> But the singer's heart sang sweeter.
> I wonder if ever a rhyme was rung,
> But the thought surpassed the meter.
> I wonder if ever a sculptor wrought,
> 'Till the cold stone echoed his ardent thought;
> Or that ever a painter, with light and shade
> The thought of his inmost soul portrayed."

The scholar tells us that at the last he is a child wandering along the ocean shore, gathering shells that are borne in by the waves, and looking out upon the vast expanse of the sea. Yes, but he is not satisfied, until he has worked his way through all obstructions and gained for himself this perpetual vision. The agnostic will say that, after all his investigation, he has reached an impenetrable wall, which he is pleased to call the Unknowable. But he does not stop digging at the wall, and now and then he puts his ear against the adamantine structure, hoping that he may hear some sounds within. Sometimes faith comes to his rescue, as when Tyndall writes and speaks of the "Scientific Uses of the Imagination." In the best ethical ideals of earth's true heroes we see an utter discontent with anything below the perfect life. In every case it is the lure of the infinite which draws men away from the ordinary walks and commonplace experiences of life. It is this Infinite which all the while (may we not say, "*Whom* all the while") they yearn for and see afar as the goal of all their ambitions.

The search for God is at the root of all religion, of all religions. Those are impressive words of the Mohammedan poet, Abdul Fazl, which he wrote at the command of the emperor Akbar, as an inscription for a temple in Kashmir:

"O God, in every temple I see people that see thee, and in every language they praise thee.

"If it be a mosque, men murmur the holy prayer, and if it be a Christian Church, they ring the bell from love to thee.

"Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister and some-

times the mosque, but it is thou whom I seek from temple to temple.

"Thine elect have no dealing with heresy or orthodoxy, for neither of these stands behind the screen of thy truth.

"Heresy to the heretic and religion to the orthodox! But the dust of the rose-petal belongs to the heart of the perfume seller."

We are reminded of Pope's well-known lines:

"Father of all, in every age,
By every clime adored,
By saint, by savage, or by sage,
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord."

There is a sense in which it might be said that there is and has been but one religion, while the various religions are but so many efforts to give expression to religion. Religion includes within itself a realization of a Power or Powers back of all things, a sense of dependence on that Power, the need of reconciliation with the Power, the devising and the use of some means by which to bring about that reconciliation. In Christianity alone are found the final interpretation and fulfillment of this one religion. It alone gives us the knowledge of the Power back of all things as a Person whom we are taught to call Father. It teaches us that the dependence upon him is the dependence of children upon a parent, that the need of reconciliation grows chiefly out of our sins, and that the only means of reconciliation is the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The growth of culture, the progress in knowledge, the development of the scientific attitude toward all life and thought do not, as some have contended, destroy religion or make it useless. They give a

larger vision of God and of his place in the world. They enlarge the sense of need and of dependence upon God. They add new meaning to the idea of reconciliation, and give us a larger Christ to provide for our higher needs, and bring us to God. Indeed while religion may change in many things external and secondary, it is a part, the most important part (and inclusive of all the rest) of that which is fundamental and permanent in human life. We may repeat with confidence, "Heaven and earth shall pass away. But my words shall not pass away."

The essential thing in religion, that without which it has no existence, is the thirst for God, as it finds its satisfaction in the Son of God incarnate. There are many things in the conduct of a church. It has grown in these days into a great business, handling many philanthropic interests and acting as the distributing agent for large sums of money. The management of the corporation demands large business skill and experience. When the congregation assembles on the Sabbath, the people find various things appealing to their fancy and their thought and making up the sum of the services. But these things are as valueless in themselves as the organ in the church without the air to fill the bellows. That business, that building, those services await the presence of God to give them meaning. The church is the dwelling-place of Jehovah. The people meet there in fellowship with one another, but they expect to meet God there, and only thus will their fellowship with one another be perfected. It too often happens that a congregation

Sabbath after Sabbath leaves the church without any profound sense of the presence of God, perfectly content to have had a good attendance, a good sermon, good music, and a good collection. We need not wonder at the tendency to place the church in the position of secondary importance.

This search for God, this perfect satisfaction of the soul in finding God, grow out of our likeness to God, a likeness to God which is the result of our relation to him as children. For exactly the same reason as we long for human companionship, and find it possible not merely by speech, but by many other means, to hold communication with one another, do we long for God and find it possible to commune with him. On the one hand it was possible for God to come in human flesh, and on the other hand we may think God's thoughts after him. We speak with perfect propriety of the divinity of man, but also of the humanity of God. In Christ there dwelt "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." At the same time we know that through all the ages holy men have spoken as they have been moved by the Holy Ghost. With all its intensely human features, the Bible may still be justly called the Word of God.

It is entirely true that we may overdo our interpretation of those phrases, more or less anthropomorphic, by which we have conveyed to us God's readiness to be our companion and to reveal himself to us. But we are in yet greater danger of robbing all these most precious and helpful truths of their meaning, and still worse of their reality. In some sense,

not merely figurative, but genuinely real, we are in our spiritual natures, which are our true selves, of the same nature, of the same stuff, if you will, as God. The distance between us may still be great. The child of a profound metaphysician may hold converse with his father, and carry with him all the while not a few marks of resemblance. A single ray of light from the great sun has all the qualities of the splendid effulgence of that great orb. A single drop of ocean water has in it all the chemical composition of the mighty deep. We cannot look at man when at his best without being reminded of God, as he uses the tremendous forces of nature to his own ends, or combines them in his inventions, or subdues by his own indomitable will the wild beasts of the forest, or threads his way through labyrinth upon labyrinth of truth and brings to light things supposed to be utterly inscrutable. Paul himself commands us to be "imitators of God, as dear children."

Let us not forget at any time that this likeness of ourselves to God is the likeness of a child to a Father. It is the filial bond that is everywhere emphasized in the Bible. The longing of God for the sinner is the longing of a father for a wayward child. Hosea represents God as crying out "O Ephraim, how can I give thee up," because Ephraim was his child and he had taught him to walk. Jesus summed up the whole truth in the matchless parable of the Prodigal Son. So also the joy of God in the righteous is the joy of a father in a faithful child. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up

my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." The obligation of a man to God is not so much the obligation of a subject to a ruler as of a child to a father. Our worship, our communion with God, must be based upon this very dear relationship. In our prayers, in our adoration, there must be present the love, the confidence, the holy and reverent intimacy of children, rather than the dread and alarm and timidity of the subject or the slave. "For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father."

In our worship we come to God apart from the world. We get away from its disturbing materials. God is in his world everywhere, but the very world keeps us from seeing him and hearing him. I once passed a church in a great city, while the chimes were playing some of the great hymns. Across the street two boys were quarreling and fighting. They did not hear the bells, and for the moment they kept me from hearing. We speak of the divine forces used in the mill, of its noises as a part of the universal music, and in a sense this is true. But this mill may be the scene of industrial strife and industrial oppression. The music may have discordant notes in it, may remind us of "sweet bells jangled out of tune." We may call our land God's country, "Land of the Pilgrims' pride." And yet it may be the scene of bitter party strife, the arena for contending ambitions, the home of radical and destructive economic theories, a shore to which races come from over the world to find that not yet

has this great people learned the meaning of Christian brotherhood. We may say that in the college and university we are discovering God's eternal truths, and with microscope and telescope beholding the invisible things of his kingdom. From these same halls of learning may go forth great floods of unbelief, and to the so-called masters the crucified Christ may be as to the Jews a stumbling-block, or as to the Greeks foolishness.

Too often in that world outside we revert to the ways of our heathen ancestors. We find our many gods and are guilty of idolatry. What is idolatry? The worshiper makes for himself an image of the god to aid him in keeping before his mind the divine ideal which he himself or others for him have devised, or he may think that in this very image in some way dwells his deity. Yes, we are unconsciously guilty of things like this, in a more refined way, perhaps, yet guilty. Children or other loved ones, wealth, culture, noble birth, success may furnish our idols. Somewhere in these we find our highest joy, our inspiration and ideals in the work of life. At the same time we cast our eyes toward some church, where we have recorded our names, and think of its altars as though they were erected for us at least to the Unknown God. Is it any wonder that John, writing to those who had but recently received the truth, should have said to them, "My little children, keep yourselves from idols." Nor need we be surprised to find Paul writing to the Corinthian Church, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are perishing; in whom the god of this

world hath blinded the hearts of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Or perhaps we attempt as many heathen are doing to-day a syncretistic movement, for ourselves combining the beliefs and worships which center in our various deities, including Jehovah. Jehovah's call summons us to come out from among them and be separate.

Few of us see how many times all of us, and all the while some of us, make our divinely religious sense the slave of some favorite task, instead of making this and every other task and energy slaves to our diviner self. Every power we have possesses a well-nigh limitless capacity. When once the soul starts on its journey, nothing can stay its progress. That by which we make our approach to God gives a vision of the Infinite, calls us to repeat the deeds of Jehovah and to think his thoughts. This power must exercise itself. If it does not do the bidding of God, it must use its energies elsewhere. Why do men sin with sins of which the beasts are not guilty, and indeed are not capable? Why do men dream such dreams as the Greeks give us in their myth of piling Pelion on Ossa or the book of Genesis in the account of the tower of Babel? Why do we find great financiers cornering wheat and corn markets, while the poor go hungry? It finds its explanation in each case in those diviner capacities which should have been used in the worship and service of God. It all reminds us of Samson blinded, grinding in a prison-house. Out in the world

this is our constant danger, because the world is ever calling for our labor. And there are things which must be done, and when we get at them, there is always the possibility we shall give ourselves too much to the things which soon pass away. So we do need to go apart. The disciples of Jesus, engaged as they were in sacred labor, were bidden by the Master go apart to a desert place and rest a while.

The frets and worries of the world put us out of tune with God and God's touch. With perfect reason, Jesus said, "Be not anxious for to-morrow." Read the things Jesus has to say about God. He is our Father. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." "All these things shall be added unto you." "Let not your heart be troubled. Believe in God. Believe also in me." "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." How can we find a God like this, while our hearts are swept by the storms of the world? Not in the fire, nor in the tempest, but in the still small voice did the prophet hear the divine voice. Some years ago with a group of ministers I was riding on quite a long journey through one of the beautiful mountain sections of our country. We were enjoying with rapture what was perhaps the most beautiful spot in all the journey, where two beautiful rivers met, when, looking down to the valley below, we saw a group of men selling lots in a newly laid-off "boom" town. They did not see the beauties, the wonderful glory about them. How could they? Lead such men through music rooms where Galli Curci or Caruso

sings, and Mischa Elman or Kreisler plays. They may hear sounds; they will hear no music. Lead them through art galleries where hang the world's masterpieces. They may see colors; they will see no pictures. So are they disqualified for finding God. They may hear the thunder and see the glory that surrounds his throne. But him they do not hear; him they do not see.

Pleasures dull the God-consciousness, as they do all the other longings of the soul. They are narcotics. Their effect wears off and leaves the soul more dissatisfied than before. But as with other narcotics, though there may be disgust and loathing for them, there is nevertheless a determination, as if under a measure of compulsion, to try them again. They bring about an utter inability to move towards higher things. Before their influence art and poetry and music take their flight. Business too goes down before their destroying touch. Nothing has so baneful an influence on the religious life as worldliness. This does not mean that we must give up all the pleasures of life. But it does mean that with regularity the spell of pleasure must be broken, and the deep, burning longings of the soul must have the opportunity to express all that they feel. We must be ready to say often in the words of the old hymn:

> "Far from my thoughts vain world be gone
> Let my religious hours alone."

Indeed, though not in any monkish sense, if we would reach the heights of the knowledge and practice fully

the divine presence, we must get away from all the world even at its best, in some closet, on some mountain-top, in some desert place, or in the quiet of some temple in fellowship with other women and men, who, like ourselves, for the moment have no desire except to meet with God.

There is ever the possibility that we may take the world with us into the sacred place, where we are expecting to find God. We are still perplexed with our business problems, planning for our next round of pleasures, fretting over the petty annoyances which are ever with us outside. What a startling vision it would be, if the minds of any congregation were open to our gaze. Let us not imagine that we shall find God, just because we have come to his house or have put ourselves in the attitude of prayer and worship in our closets. There is that other blessed possibility of withdrawing a while from the world on the crowded streets, and in the noise and rush of business, and there communing with God. In either case, "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

In our places of worship we use material things, means to the great ends we have before us in our worship. There are other things which we cannot properly call material, but which are not in themselves necessarily religious. All the world is sacramental. Each object which we see or touch, each experience reminds us of God or some fact in his kingdom of grace. How many times Jesus said, "The kingdom of

heaven is like" this or that. And we need not be surprised at this, for all things were made by him and in each thing his hand and his mind must be seen.

> "Our midnight is Thy smile withdrawn;
> Our noontide is Thy gracious dawn;
> Our rainbow arch Thy mercy's sign;
> All, save the clouds of sin, are Thine."

We have a right then to expect to see in all creation the image of the invisible, spiritual things revealed to our hearts by God's personal revelation. And we need not be surprised that in skillful hands things wholly material may be made to give effective and eloquent expression to the noblest dreams and inspirations. There can be no more forcible illustration of this than art. The early church fathers said that no one could look on the famous chryselephantine statue of Zeus, without being lifted to higher thoughts and better living. What a call to purity does one find in the Apollo Belvedere, and what a call to heavenly mindedness in the Sistine Madonna!

In the church those things which outside are sacramental are used for sacramental purposes. Jesus performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and then reminding the people that this meal might be to them a symbol of himself, he said, "I am the Bread of Life." In the most holy of the church ordinances, he again used bread, but said, as he handed the broken fragments to his disciples, "Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you." Pure water is used to represent in baptism the washing of regeneration. Words, which may be used for many ends wholly secular,

become the Christian message which on human lips may be the foolishness of preaching, but may in God's hands bring about his pleasure to save them that believe. And we shall not overlook the prologue to the Gospel of John and the description there given of Jesus, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The beauty of the house of worship brings us "to behold the beauty of the Lord," as we "inquire in his temple." The great organ, which is in itself a great orchestra, and the great choir lift our thoughts to the heavenly multitude who rest not day nor night, as they sing God's praise and strike their many harps. The church building is a constant reminder of the sanctity and glory of the new Jerusalem, "Jerusalem, the golden."

It is easy for us to be so obsessed by the means of grace that we shall miss the grace, to be so attracted by the symbol as to overlook altogether the lesson it teaches. We may go to church to hear the splendid music, or to see the beautiful windows, or to listen to the eloquence of the gifted preacher. Or we may look for magical effects in the round of ritualistic and sacramental performances. The place of prayer may become a place of entertainment and no more. The church may magnify unduly the materials used for sacramental worship. The building may be too elaborately decorated, the music may be so chosen and so rendered as to fix attention exclusively on the music and the performers, and the preacher may attract attention to himself rather than to the Christ whose messenger he is. The perfection of it all may be its

greatest imperfection. It is noteworthy how often ritualism grows when spirituality begins to decline, as in many a home the absence of love and tenderness is atoned for by improving the furnishings or by giving luxurious entertainments.

The opposite extreme to ritualism quite often is just as surely an indication of a lack of spirituality. The man who says he cannot worship with any form, and must cast aside all the beautiful and rid himself of all symbolism, may be as far from God as the man who insists he must go through certain routine prayers and put himself in certain attitudes in order to satisfy his religious nature. It is as though a man should insist that he must leave the stately mansion which wealth has made it possible for him to build in the aristocratic section of some city for himself and his family and go back to the log house in the mountains, where they spent together their humbler days, in order to bring back to himself his love and devotion to his wife and children. There is furthermore the strong probability that, having conceived the idea that we cannot find God in beautiful churches and through beautiful forms, we shall begin to think of the beauty and harmony of the world as wholly sensuous or even sensual and wholly emptied of God. Instead of singing with the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork," we shall assume the pessimistic and Buddhistic attitude, and find at every turn of life no matter how great the beauty or the glory, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Jesus loved to go to the temple on the great days of the

Hebrew church year, and so truly found God there in the multiplied forms of worship, that he called the place the house of prayer. On the other hand, in the synagogue with its great plainness of service he read in the Scripture for the day the words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord," and when he had closed the book, declared, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

It must be admitted that different temperaments find different methods of approach to God, and we must recognize the rights of others in such sacred matters while we claim our own. The logician will probably find God through his reasoning powers. He may prefer that church where the preaching function is emphasized, and where the preacher has the same type of mind as himself. The man of artistic and poetic taste will like a service where the beautiful is present in a larger degree and he can find God more easily there. The emotional man feels nearer God in a church where the evangelistic note and method are in all the preaching, singing, and prayers. To all these lives, God may be truly speaking, and through them as well, the same truth with the same voice. It is the same wind pumped by the bellows through the various stops and pipes of the organ, although the tones so largely vary, and the same music may be played again and again with varied combinations. So the Spirit of God, who like the wind bloweth where he listeth, may bring forth the same experience and the same truth through

lives as widely different as a James Martineau, a Phillips Brooks, a D. L. Moody, a Billy Sunday. That the experiences are the same is plainly indicated in the hymnals of the different churches. In our Methodist hymnal, for illustration, we have hymns by Roman Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, Episcopalians, Baptists, Calvinists of every type, Quakers and Methodists. The experiences are the same, but how very different were the conditions and forms under which they had these experiences. The important thing is that they found God, or that God found them. And this is evident, that it is one and the same God.

We must trust neither to our temperaments nor to the forms of the house of God. We must keep before ourselves why we are in that place selected by us for our devotions. A constant weakness of all life is the dissipation of our energies among non-essential things, at least non-essential from the point of view of the thing we are doing. So men fail in business, and in the accumulations and purposes of scholarship. So generals with great armies have met with ultimate defeat, when by every token they should have won the war. Nowhere else is it more needful to make the motto of our lives, "This one thing I do," than here. We may so easily turn ourselves into psalm-singers, or sermon-tasters, or repeaters of creeds, and "amid the blaze of gospel day," find ourselves in darkness. There must ring in our souls the prophetic command, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near." And no man ever sought in vain.

These means (so often material) used in our worship, God has used more frequently than we think to bring the unsaved to himself. Here are things which they understand and which they like, and as they draw near to see the sight they find God, as Moses found him in the bush on the desert. One day, shortly after a rather elaborate Easter Sunday in my church, I received a letter from a man telling me that on that Sunday he heard the chimes in the church tower, and drew near the church to hear them the better. He was surprised to find so costly a church building in that city, and thought he would step inside for just a moment. The organist, and then the choir, attracted his attention, and he stopped to hear them through. He then felt he ought not to leave. The sermon seemed as though it had been especially prepared for him, a man who some years before had lost his only son and child and given up all his faith. He had given his heart anew to God, and the next Sunday was to reunite with the church.

Our hearts will not be satisfied unless we find God himself. At times we try to reason ourselves into the confidence that he is near. Perhaps we go over the old arguments called by long names, cosmological and the rest, until we are moved to say, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." We work out very little more than the conviction that the universe, including ourselves, is inexplicable without the thought of his existence. This is good as far as it goes, but how short a distance it takes us! It would be a comfort to a child, bereft of his parents in infancy to be able to assure himself of his legitimate birth of noble

lineage, but it would never repay him for the lack of a mother's caress or a father's strong, yet tender, protection. It would be sweet to him to look at the portrait of his mother, but a poor substitute would this be for her kiss and the gaze of her eyes deep down into his. I would not say that philosophical arguments are worthless. No, they confirm our faith. They assure us that the fellowship in which we rejoice is a reality, and no fond dream. They give us ready answers to those who call our joy in question. At the same time we need far more than this. There is little to inspire and comfort here. In the presence of the most unanswerable arguments philosophy may present, we should be moved to exclaim, "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."

Of little more value is a theological elaboration of the attributes of God, based in never so orthodox a manner on the revelations of God in the Word of God. My mother one day towards the evening told me in most beautiful words of the beautiful traits of a brother whom I had lost before I was old enough to know him, and spoke with special tenderness of his great love for me. I felt the big tears roll down my cheeks before I knew it, and I cried, "Oh if he had only lived to be my companion and my closest, dearest friend." Theological treatises cannot take the place of the Father's presence. A history of dogma is a most fascinating study. But it is the story of how other men thought of God and stood related to him. He cannot thus come to be to us our Lord, our God, our Father. Periods of the most loyal orthodoxy have

been quite often periods of coldness or even deadness in the church. In northern Africa, once a stronghold of the church, it was not so long after that remarkable theological literature, which still holds our attention, had been created, that Mohammedanism swept away almost the last vestige of organized Christianity, because among other reasons, it came with some earnest thoughts of a personal God to a people, who, in spite of all their protestations of faith, were largely without a sense of the divine presence in their hearts.

Nor does the reading and study of the Bible, in which we see the movements of God not only in Jewish but in all history, the visions and revelations granted by God to his saints and prophets, the communion of the heroes of the faith with God in burning bush, on mountain-top, and elsewhere, where Jesus appears, and where the story of his life is recorded, and the day of Pentecost brings the baptism of the Holy Ghost to the disciples, take the place of the personal touch of God or his personal word to our souls. There are some who say there is no Holy Spirit to-day. We have the Bible as the substitute. Many who may not hold this view as a definite theological dogma, do hold it as a practical working theory of their religious life. The goal of their religious ambition is to read the Bible regularly and intelligently, always in the light of conservative views of the origin of the Scriptures, and to find here together with prayer at stated times the satisfaction of their religious desires. Whatever else or more the Bible may be, it is the record of a revelation, progressive very largely in its nature, which

God has made throughout the ages past to men. It is for us, by help of these men of faith, to put ourselves in such an attitude that the God who is ever seeking may reveal himself to us also, and verify the word which other men have left on record for us as coming from God. It makes no very great difference whether we shall say the Bible is the Word of God or the Bible contains the Word of God. The important thing for us to know is that God has spoken to the fathers by the prophets.

We hear much said about the influences of the Holy Spirit. It is a frequent and favorite topic for prayer. Just what is meant by it does not seem as a rule to be clear to the minds of those who use the phrase. It reminds us, however, of those tendencies, coming to the front in so many ways in the history of religious thought, to place intermediaries between men and God, as if there were a dread of coming too near to him or as if he would not permit such intimacy with himself. A man said to me not long ago, "My mother died when I was a boy. I cried myself to sleep many a time longing for her to come back to me, but her influence lingered with me and lingers still." Blind indeed is he who cannot see the evidences of God's presence in the world, the influence of that presence on nations and individuals alike. But this is all a poor substitute for that face to face converse with him which every one may enjoy. A transformation would come into many lives, if, instead of being content with some far away indefinite influence of God upon their lives, they should begin like Enoch to walk with God.

It is the difference between John Wesley, the member of the Holy Club at Oxford or preaching as a missionary of the English Church in Savannah, and John Wesley in the chapel in Aldersgate Street, feeling his heart strangely warmed, and ready now to become a flaming evangel to the common people of England.

It is not easy to make real to ourselves the presence of God with us, and still more difficult to bring others to see that our claims are not mere fantasies, extreme mystical experiences, common more or less among the devotees of all religions. Men have constantly endeavored to locate God in some sacred spot or in some idol or some temple. Here, too, the cry has gone up, "Let us build tabernacles." But students of the ethnic religions know that, in some of these, it became necessary to think and speak of repeated incarnations or avatars. The manifestation in the flesh of centuries ago will not suffice. To us to-day the historical Jesus is not sufficient. We, too, should like to behold him and thrust our hands into his wounds, and find that he is truly the Christ of whom we have read and of whom we have sung. This is one reason for the stress laid, at one time more than at another, on premillennial views of the return of Jesus. And these views are more to the fore in days of restlessness and doubt. Perhaps we are prepared to admit that God does break the awful silence which hems us in and brings us such oppression for a few great saints and prophets to-day, perhaps for ourselves at some great crisis or in some extraordinary need, and then we nearly always speak of his message as if it had come in some out-

ward sign or audible word, as if it were impossible for such a message to come to us otherwise. Do we not with the unbelieving Jews demand a sign from heaven, or ask that the Father should be actually shown to us? If there is to be any real value in his presence with men, it must be possible for all men to know him, and to know him at all times and in all places.

The personal relationships of life are not so dependent, as we sometimes think, on the material or physical processes or manifestations. It is not possible for us, it may be, to give an exact description of the features of a dear friend's face. Now and then we are surprised that some one has noted some peculiarity of countenance or movement of some loved one, altogether unnoticed by ourselves. The touch of the mother's hand or the sound of her almost noiseless footstep in the dark quiets the baby's cry. We often feel the approach of friends or dear ones, before we see them or hear their voices. It is astonishing how quickly we know who is at the other end of the telephone line in a distant city. It ought not to be to us a thing incredible that God, our Father, should be able to make us know his nearness without words or signs. Those inspirations which so often stir us when alone, those nobler dreams and holier ambitions, those deeds of heroism which surprise ourselves, what are they but his Word whispered or thundered in the ears of our souls. Interesting still is the oft-told story of how Helen Keller, blind and deaf, when led by Phillips Brooks into a knowledge of God, said, "I knew him all the time but did not

know his name." And faith is rid of much of its difficulty when we keep before us the humanity of God as not only brought before us in the incarnation, but as eternally present in the Godhead, the Triune God, if you will, for we must know that, with all the mysteries in the divine nature, there must be much, very much, in what God is forever speaking that we may understand if we but listen.

> "So, the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
> So, through the thunder comes a human Voice
> Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
> Face, my hands fashioned, see it in Myself!
> Thou hast no power nor may'st conceive of Mine,
> But Love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
> And thou must love Me, who have died for thee.'"

Our inmost souls must go out after God. If in our hours of worship there is danger that we shall be satisfied with something less than God, nay, with a substitute for God, it as frequently is true that we present to God something less or other than ourselves. On Sunday morning in the church we are giving what? A hymn well sung, an anthem, a sermon well prepared and well delivered, a body well clothed and clean, an envelope with some money in it. If we go beyond this, and bring to fellowship our spirits as well, it may be that we limit ourselves to our intellect or our emotions or our wills. Or we hold back from that hour the inner self which has been battling with great spiritual problems during the week, or has found some gratifying pleasure, some noble human loves. We come to God like great organs half of whose stops are silent or a violin all whose strings have snapped save

one. The best of musicians with such instruments are restricted in the giving of the music of their souls. So God needs all we are in order to speak his truth and pour out his music. Things in us which at other times do not show their faces must be present now. These are the things which make us what we are. These are the things which God most of all desires. While I do not much care for the term in this connection, it is in a sense the subconscious self that must meet God in the way and hold communion with him. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty," God's Word assures us. With equal truth might that Word have said, "When God dwells in the secret place of human lives, he knows those lives and those lives know him."

Here is found no place for unreality, for mere acting, for what the Gospels call hyprocrisy. There must be neither a claim for greatness or purity which we do not possess, nor the maudlin acknowledgment of weaknesses or crimes of which we are not guilty. A teacher of a class in art asked a negro woman, a relic of the olden days both in manner and in dress to pose as a model for her students. At the hour appointed she appeared dressed in the garb of these modern days, wearing clothes she had borrowed from her neighbors for the occasion, and assuming the airs of her white sisters, and so totally unfit to fill her engagement. Just as the preacher frequently assumes an entirely different tone of voice when he stands in the pulpit, the worshiper will cease to be the man of the

streets or of the counting-house. Such a man receives what truth may come to him as if he were a phonograph, or a sign-board on which to hang important announcements. No better words could have been given us with which to enter on our worship than Charlotte Elliott's much used hymn:

> "Just as I am without one plea,
> But that thy blood was shed for me,
> And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
> O Lamb of God, I come! I come!"

These are they who get the most from God, as they also give the most to God.

Certainly there must be sincere confession. Such a confession will show that we know ourselves and have brought these selves to God. It will involve an acquaintance with the good in ourselves and a modest claim. The very recognition of our sins and failures carries with it a recognition of the fact, that these do not represent our true selves, and that we may do better than we have ever done before. But there will be a due appreciation of our distance from the ideal both human and divine, and a profound sorrow for our infirmities. This vision of our imperfections will be the more vivid when we come into the presence of God's glory and love, and the higher we climb in the achievement of character, the more will each omission pain our souls, even as a Paderewski will shudder at a discordant note in his playing—to him discordant, but unnoticed by the hearer. While making our confession, let us remember that experience of Ezekiel, when God appears to him, and he throws himself upon his

face, and God says to him, "Stand on thy feet and I will speak to thee." And did not God reprove Moses for belittling himself, when he was called to the great task of delivering the children of Israel from bondage? We must present with the confession of our sins the confession also of our true greatness—a greatness against which we have sinned as truly as we have sinned against God. It will appear to us as a greatness rather in its possibilities, a greatness which awaits the presence of God to bring it to completeness.

It will not be sufficient for us on the Lord's Day to seek to shake ourselves loose from worldly concerns, not even if we add the saying of our prayers at stated hours during the week, if at all other times our minds and hearts are overwhelmed with business and pleasure. If we give the best that is in us most of the time to that which is earthy, we shall find it well-nigh impossible during the remaining moments to give that best to heavenly things. Do we not frequently see men, good men, energetic in business, enthusiastic over sports, devoted to the battles of politics, dull and lackadaisical in the church, whether in worship or in the work of the kingdom? They have used up their energies on other things. They have but little to present to God. We must keep before ourselves in our busiest moments the conviction that this life of ours is not for these things. We must reserve our best for God's service. The business itself will then have a new meaning.

Here is a man into whose home the first child has come. He is a man of large business interests. But now all his interests of every sort are viewed from the

standpoint of a six or seven-pound piece of flesh. He hurries home with a new step. He has in mind all the day long, crowding into his busy hours, his interviews, his orders to his employees, the dreams he has for the future of his boy. No longer do the material interests take the first place; a new responsibility, a new joy has come into his life. I have a friend, who, in the notebook which he keeps in his vest pocket to record his engagements and other matters of special interest and importance, records side by side, and not on separate pages, things demanding his attention in business, in social and civic affairs, in church and Sunday School. Such a life God can find when he has a word to say. Great men of wealth have a way of guarding well the entrance to their offices, and it is impossible to have conferences with them, except when they are convinced that you have a matter of real interest to them. Many a life presents a picture like this in the presence of God. He must await his turn—and possibly his turn will never come.

There must be an enthusiastic entrance of our whole self into this experience. None of the greater things can be done by those who go at them in a half-hearted way. Every kingdom worth possessing must be taken by violence if taken at all. The Bible presents us many illustrations. There is Jacob wrestling with the angel, with all his powers, until the break of day, and saying all the while, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me." There is the Syro-Phenician still holding on in spite of the Master's refusal and saying, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the rich

man's table." And there is Paul pressing upon God his plea for deliverance, until the victory comes in the assurance of grace sufficient for all trials. Indeed in the whole history of the church you will find that those to whom God has most fully made himself known have gladly opened up their souls to him. You see it in men like Carey, and Judson, and Livingstone, in Augustine, and Luther, and Wesley. With abounding joy they search their lives for some new treasure to give to God. Hear Charles Wesley sing:

> "O would He more of heaven bestow,
> And let the vessels break,
> And let our ransomed spirits go
> To grasp the God we seek;
> In rapturous awe on Him to gaze,
> Who bought the sight for me;
> And shout and wonder at His grace
> Through all eternity."

Only those things to which we give ourselves enthusiastically get the depths of our souls. Our inmost selves respond to God only in so far as we love him with all our soul and with all our mind and with all our strength.

The largest experiences come with an entire abandon of ourselves, like that with which we receive our largest gifts of friendship and love, of music, art and nature's beauties. This does not mean that we are to yield blindly to anything, however high or holy, or even to God. But it does mean that, having found out the truth or beauty of those things of largest value, we are no longer to waste our time in continuous reasoning or seeking of proof. We are to yield ourselves un-

hesitatingly henceforth, and thus do we discover things otherwise unknown. And there comes to us a growing confidence in the reality of those things which by the slower processes of reasoning, we had accepted as true. They come to have such an intimate connection with all that makes us men, that our very being afterwards depends upon them. To give them up is like destroying ourselves. Nor should we forget that God gives himself to us with the same abandon. Because he loves, he gives out of his great heart his Son. In the cross he lays at our feet all the resources that are in him. To them that love God all things work together for good. In the atonement we have the power of God unto salvation for every one that believes. Thus as he pours out his sunbeams without counting them, and scatters the wild flowers over the prairies, even where no eye sees them, so he pours forth his truth and love upon the world and gives without stint himself.

Finding God in the church and in other hours of worship, we see and hear him elsewhere. We belong to that happy group of whom it is said:

> "Where'er they seek Thee, Thou art found,
> And every spot is holy ground."

Men of artistic training, who have lived among the masterpieces of Raphael, or Angelo, or Rembrandt, get such a knowledge of their genius and of the characteristics of their work, that out of piles of paintings, the creators of which are unknown, they are able now to pick out those which may have been the productions of these distinguished men. And the same is true of

literature and music. The expert lapidary, constantly handling, cutting, and setting diamonds and other precious stones, comes at last to see at a glance the genuine jewels and the imitations, and among the genuine to decide the relative values. When Samuel went to Eli to ask the bidding of the priest, thinking it was his voice he heard calling him, with all his failings and failures Eli knew whose voice Samuel had heard, and told him if he heard the voice again, to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Not altogether in vain had he performed his daily round of duties, waiting upon the Lord and receiving the Word. When Mr. Fletcher had died, one night Mrs. Fletcher had a dream, a vision in which she saw the great host of the redeemed and heard them sing, and in the chorus she recognized her husband's voice, which she had heard through years of intimate, loving fellowship. She insists that she would have known that voice anywhere. There are many sounds in the world around us, but in the midst of them the voice of God is ever speaking, speaking to us. How happy is it, if we have in the secret place become so familiar with that voice, that we shall know it anywhere, and so shall never find it silenced by the noises that crowd us in.

After a while the formal stated prayer is very simple. It does not become at any time needful to agonize, as it has been expressed. Here is a great saint and teacher who had a favorite pupil boarding in his home. The young man was greatly impressed by the good man's purity of life and apparent nearness to God. He lingered at the teacher's chamber door one

night, when he was about to retire, listening, if perchance he might pray aloud. The pupil was almost startled at the simplicity of the prayer, "O Lord, we have known and understood each other for a long time. I thank thee for the blessings of this day, and for thy presence with me now. Good night." This same great teacher was heard one day by this same pupil, while making ready for his classes of the next day, to cry out as he meditated on the teachings of Jesus, "I have but one passion. It is he. It is he." Such a man will not seek to ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above. He will not descend into the depths to bring Christ up from the dead. The word will indeed be nigh, in his mouth and in his heart. He enjoys what may be called the immediacy of the divine presence. His daily work, whether secular or religious, is so performed that it partakes of the nature of prayer, and with each stroke the hands of God are by his hands, and the voice of God cheers him on. I heard a man say not long ago that before he had ever had any great sorrow, he had worked out, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the meaning of an experience like this, and had learned to find God always near, and so, he said, when the sorrow did at last come, a great and heavy one, immediately God filled his life with his presence.

Here is the best solution in a quite practical way of what we are pleased to call the mysterious providences of God. When God is ever with us, the God we learned to know in the moments of glad experience, we feel the assurance at last that he is the same yesterday and

to-day and forever. The things we do not understand must be interpreted in the light of those triumphant moments when he is so near. It is not hard for us to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." A Confederate soldier was once talking about Stonewall Jackson in my presence. He first at some length spoke of the nobility of the man, his deep piety, his faith in God, his loyalty to duty no matter how hard. Then he began telling us how exacting he was, how hard on his men, how almost pitiless in his requirements, when all at once he paused and said, "But we men adored Stonewall, we were willing to attempt anything he asked." The world—and this includes our part of it which seems for a while to be in a tangle—is his world. He made it with all its beauty and order and music. His Spirit, long before the order came, when there was naught but desolateness and emptiness "sat brooding over the vast abyss." Surely now he is able to take care of the situation in which his creation finds itself. He came to us in a new creation; he so released our inner selves and so impressed us with a sense of our sonship, that our hearts cried out with fervent joy. We are not to be disturbed now by earthquake and tempest. He can take care of his new creation also. We have then but to hear his voice and all is well. As the child of a lovely Christian mother was being placed on the operating table, she turned and asked her mother, "Does this have to be done." "Yes, my child," she said. Then the child answered with a smile on her face, "It is all right." Very early do we learn that the fellowship with God is a fellowship of suffer-

ing, and we are not surprised to find it so. We need but to know it is his voice we hear.

> "Breathe through the heat of our desire
> Thy coolness and Thy balm;
> Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire:
> Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,
> O still small voice of calm!"

We come back to our Bibles to find new meaning in them, and to have many of our difficulties fade away. We have heard his Word; we come now to read his Word, and it is the same Word. It is a message of fatherly love and solicitude, a message of warning and of grace, a call to duty and to sacrifice. Read the Psalms, the Gospels, the Epistles and in all alike we feel at home now. The God who spoke to us in our experiences, in the worship of the Church, in the closet, is the God who spoke to David, and Paul, and John. As we roam through these sacred pages, we find nothing strange. It is an old sweet truth with which we are perfectly familiar. The means by which the truth is conveyed to us have lost their importance. We have heard God speak to us in the elaborate ritual, in the humble prayer-meeting, in the camp-meeting, and on the corner of the street, where with a band of music the Salvation Army calls the people to hear the gospel preached. What we longed for and what we heard was the voice of God. Our Bibles give God's message in many ways and in many portions—through ancient story, burning bush, fable, history, wars, parables, miracles, until the final revelation in Jesus of Nazareth. We greatly blunder, when we contend for

any special interpretation of these means employed, whether these interpretations be conservative, progressive, or radical. If, with our acquaintance with God, in our hours of worship we read this wonderful divine library, we shall hear him speaking to men in all the past, even as he has spoken to us, and we shall realize that we are a part of that goodly company in all the ages to whom he has made known his saving truth.

When we go from this intimate acquaintance with God out into the world, and hear the many voices crying, "Lo! here is God. Lo! there is God," we are not deceived. The traveler who has spent much time in lands where the mirage is common, and who at the same time is familiar with the beauties of real mountains and lakes, and palaces, will not be deceived by the optical illusion which sometimes has lured men on to death. There are fanaticisms and religious hysterias and impossible experiences ever among us. They claim peculiar honor for themselves. They are found at times connected with beliefs both absurd and dangerous. They are quite unlike those genuine raptures of God's true children, which he grants as foretastes of heaven. The protection against all false ecstasy is the "unction from the Holy One," and not a rationalism which dries up the fountains of the soul. We must not, just because there are so many sects constantly arising which assert they have special insight into the truth and special fellowship with God and revelations from him, coupled with physical manifestations which have no relation to the Spirit of God, surrender those rich and real joys, that holiness of life, that consecra-

tion to the service of God and to human good, which are the direct result of the life of God with us and in us. Every hypocrisy, every religious sham or travesty indicates that somewhere are to be found the things of which these are but the imitations. We must trust those blessed hours of worship in which we have seen God face to face in a sublime spiritual sense, and yet have lived.

Look for a few moments at the ennobling, enlarging, strengthening power of worship. This we should expect, if worship is all we claim for it. Here we come into contact with the God who is the source of life and power. We look out on the boundless expanse of the infinite. We are taken out of the wholly material, and feel the breaking of the fetters that bind us to the visible and temporal. We see all things that are and all that are yet to be, not in some fragmentary way, but whole, as they center themselves in God and are held together by his hands. We see the spiritual side of things, even the most sensuous, and all the material is only a thin veil behind which we see the face of the Eternal. We come into contact with men, whether we kneel in the public worship or in private devotions, and this contact with men means now association with the best in them, that which makes them men, that which makes us of one race and all of us the children of God. And we are in communion with the saints beyond the river. In those hours, too, the richest, best within ourselves asserts itself, and we know ourselves as before we did not dream ourselves to be. You

no doubt remember these words of Browning in his "Paracelsus":

> "Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
> From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
> There is an inmost center in us all
> Where truth abides in fulness: and around,
> Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
> This perfect, clear conception—which is truth,
> A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
> Binds it and makes all error: and to *know*
> Rather consists in opening out a way
> Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
> Than in effecting entry for a light
> Supposed to be without."

Two things happen to our intellects. We have bigger minds with which to think. We are not bound by the rules and regulations which govern the great society of the intellectuals. We are not browbeaten and not affrighted by their great wisdom. We also dare think, as we dare leap and walk, and sing. Neither the theological nor the ecclesiastical inquisition can retain its hold upon our reasons nor us. "We are mounting up with wings as eagles," now, and neither the snare of the fowler, nor the shot of the rifle can reach us. Most of us still have such poor vision, that we see man as trees walking—what a queer universe; it is largely topsy-turvy. We wait for that divine touch which shall give the clear insight.

And then there is brought to us the material for our bigger minds, our liberated thoughts to use. We begin to learn that this is not a dangerous universe we live in, that it is neither inhabited nor owned by the devil's forces, that it is our Father's house of many mansions, that every dwelling-place, yea, every room is free from

terror, that the tomb itself has in it no gloom, since Jesus has lain there. We know now that the universe was made for us and we for the universe, that each interprets the other and that only as they work together can the glory of either be revealed. Hear the words of Paul, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." This creation he has already said, "shall know the liberty of the glory of the children of God." The materials of so many thinkers come from only a part of God's great world. Science deals with the material facts. History often limits itself to wars and diplomatic conflicts; economics becomes a study without heart.

Note the effect on our emotions and tastes. It has become quite common for the scholar to distrust, even to discredit, the emotions. They lead us astray, we are told, they interfere with the intellect, they make slaves of our volitions, they are the seat of hysteria. In this realm the fakir and the dervish live. In the progress and development of the race, the emotions must be throttled, for all higher purposes destroyed. More practical men look down with a measure of pity, if not of contempt, on the men who give us our music and art. The father of one of the world's greatest sculptors begged him not to be a stone-cutter, but to go into trade and make a fortune. A distinguished inventor found it hard to endure Ole Bull, when he played on his violin or talked about music. The trou-

ble with our emotions, as we have learned in recent years, is that they have not had their freedom, and when they do break loose, they run wild. They are to be trusted fully as much as our intellects. The two must go together and neither is safe without the other. The emotions need the cleansing touch of worship, the enlargement which makes them more akin to the feelings, the joys and the sorrows, of the great heart of God, for a very large part of the anthropomorphisms of the Bible are emotional and not intellectual. The need of art and music is a return to that former closer relation with God and his kingdom. To this day we have no such music and art, as those which find their subjects and inspirations in the religion of Jesus Christ. It has been the testimony of not a few that, in the exaltation of hours of worship, they have had the visions which they chained to canvas, or to the harp and organ.

Great characters have in worship been enriched and broadened. I do not forget the value of the conflicts and temptations of life, that we are urged to glory in trial, and count it all joy when subjected to them. Nor do I overlook the fact that, in mingling with men and dealing with affairs, we grow as if in a great university with its many chairs and laboratories. Does not worship give us the life and power for labor and temptation, a new strength without which we should be utterly defeated and ruined? Few of us would not testify, that, often, when the battle seemed to be against us, we have sought the Lord, more in communion than in petition, and have gone back to the struggle to win.

Many tell us that, accustomed as they are to worship, they spend most time at the altar on their busiest days, because on those days they need God's grace most. What materials we gain out of our experiences, out of the hard knocks received in the world, we very largely build into ourselves, while in quiet fellowship with God, and they are more carefully fit into us, much of that which is non-essential being rejected. At other times, we may be too busy to make the proper use of them, or they lie there in our characters unassimilated, like books on library shelves never read, valuable indeed, if only they were read and mastered. In worship, God gives out of himself materials gotten nowhere else. "They that wait upon the Lord renew their strength." And there are those things within ourselves which God alone discovers. Nothing in the universe is greater than man—but God. The soul can have no real master but him. His voice to our buried greatness is like the voice of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus.

Greater things are done and larger daring shown by those who have talked with God. We have but to read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, the Acts of the Apostles and the annals of missionary endeavor to find innumerable illustrations—heroes of the faith, all of them, heroes of prayer, heroes of God. What inspiring pictures of Jesus, in every crisis of his career, going to the temple or the synagogue, or retiring to a mountain-top, to a desert place, or at last to the Garden of Gethsemane. Following all such incidents you expect to see some heroic deed, or to hear some wondrous

truth. We catch a sight of the great plans of God, when we bow our hearts before him. We see the things he has done and is doing. Feeling our kinship to him and seeing the practicability of his plans, as he works them out in us and in the world, we are moved to attempt what to men may be impossible, unless they keep their eyes on God.

The body feels the thrill of communion with God. Moses, when he came down from the mount, wist not that the skin of his face shone. On the mount of transfiguration the body and the clothing of Jesus were aglow with a heavenly light. Many times fatigued by the labor and cares of the day, after we had decided not to go to the Wednesday night prayer-meeting, we have been impelled by duty not to consult our feelings, and have found ourselves rested and refreshed in body, as in mind and spirit. We have made altogether too little of the connection between our religious life, especially our worship, and the health and beauty of the body. Far wrong are they who think they can best get relief from the toil of the week by lounging in their beds the larger part of the Sabbath. The house of God is the divine repair shop, and when God lays his restoring hand upon us, he does not overlook our bodies.

When God talks with us our whole religious life is deepened and broadened. The Christian life is much more than worship. It says to us, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." The inclination to neglect the morning, the evening sacrifice quite often takes hold upon us, because we think

the essential thing is the godly walk and conversation. Sometimes we imagine we see something narrowing and belittling in the attendance upon the forms of worship. Our religion is dependent for its existence on God who is its source. The more of God's personal presence we enjoy, the nobler our religion will be. I heard some one at the telephone in my office the other day say, "Give me a better connection, Central." This is our need—a better connection.

Lecture II

THE MUTUAL SURRENDER

Lecture II

THE MUTUAL SURRENDER: GOD AND OURSELVES

EVERY act of worship is more than fellowship between God and ourselves. It is the surrender of God to us: it is the surrender of ourselves to God. This is the normal relationship. Love, which is the ultimate force in the universe, binds all things together, unites heaven and earth and unites God and man. We recognize this truth, among others, in the Pauline idea of a universe finding its life and its explanation in Jesus Christ. This love has as its essential characteristic the giving of one's self. If God truly loves, he must give himself to the world. If men love God, they must give themselves to God. Here we see the real meaning of the mutual seeking. Man has ever been searching for God: God has ever been searching for man. For this reason, it is not always possible to distinguish between the two givings in the season of worship. It is like the service rendered each to the other in a perfect home, where each seeks to anticipate the other. There is no need of seeking to distinguish between the two, for in the ideal religious life the two will always, must always, be together. There is a joy in being possessed by God, so that we

become God-intoxicated men, driven out to marvelous deeds, filled with wondrous thoughts, seeing unutterable visions. There is a joy in possessing God, so that we have his aid in furthering our holy ambitions and completing our incomplete plans. At all such times our ambitions, schemes, ideals are one, and in the accomplishment of them there is perfect coöperation.

We need not hesitate to say that God needs us. We miss much that is most beautiful in the Bible, if we have not learned this. The prophetic message is full of cries of God for his children to come back to him. He appears again and again as a heart-broken Father, who cannot be happy until his children, though never so wayward, come back to him, and with this the teaching of Jesus, nay, his very coming into the world, is in perfect accord. A child, when asked by a visitor if she would not go home with him to be his child, replied, "No, my mother could not do without me." This is the true statement of our relation to God. There can be no fatherhood without children, and if the children once in the home, go out of it, the fatherhood once more feels its incompleteness. A remarkable fact is here, in that no matter how many children there may be, no one can be given up. Each one seems to unfold and enrich the fatherhood. Each one has a special place in affection and thought, and each one has his special service in making the fatherhood more meaningful. Who can look out on the innumerable tribes and kindreds of the earth, without feeling God is nobler for having made them all, and for God's sake every one should be loved and cared for? There must

be those on whom God, our Father, may pour out his higher love. Sad, but beautiful, is the picture of Jesus looking down on Jerusalem, the city which had so persistently rejected him, and grieving because while he so strongly desired to gather its people together, they had refused. We think of the tendrils of a clinging vine still holding out their tiny fingers as if to grasp, when the vine is trailing in the dust. And surely he needs us in the consummation of those plans of his which can find their completion only in human hands.

It would seem needless to say that we need God. But here is the need in a peculiar sense—the need of a God who is our very own, given to us by himself. His heart is ours. His resources unlimited are ours, ours without any need of constraint or urging by us. We do not need to speak long or seek some special place or present some special sacrifice. His life is ours, as a mother's life belongs to her babe, and in later years to her grown up son, who may walk in at any hour of the night, and know that her gentle hand will make the bed for him, and brush away his cares and pains. He must serve us, and will serve us. He enters into our life according to the favorite symbol of the bread, which, when we feed upon it, becomes a part of ourselves. In us there are the two witnesses to our sonship—our own spirits and the Spirit of God living and working together in perfect harmony. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

In some systems of philosophy we are led to the study of God apart from the world and man, and of

man and the world apart from God. This may be legitimate from a merely scientific point of view, but even here it has led to many of our theological and philosophical errors—it has landed multitudes of thinkers in materialism or an extreme idealism, at other times in pantheism. No correct, no sane philosophy is ever reached through such a process, because God and the world never exist apart, and no doubt cannot exist apart. We are dealing here and must deal with facts, however difficult to explain, precious facts, and not with theories spun by human brains, however brilliant. We meet two thoughts of God side by side, in combination, found together nowhere else either in religion or in science—the immanence of God and his transcendence. Hinduism emphasizes the former, and we have all the uncleanness of an extreme pantheism. Mohammedanism has emphasized the second, and we have all the chill of an absentee landlordism on the part of the Creator of the universe. Philosophies have swung hopelessly between the two. Christianity does not explain the mystery, but states the blessed truths—God is independent of his works in the sense that he is a personality, but he is not far from any one of us, and "in him we live and move and have our being," while "not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father."

Our worship of God confirms us in the knowledge of a God and a universe which live in eternal union with each other. Worship gives us a better sphere, within which to work out a correct theology or philosophy, than a gathering of scholars met to formulate

a creed or confession of faith. The soul sees the facts and accepts them, even when it does not understand and cannot explain, but it knows. So here, with simple childlike faith, in the time of communion with God, we discover the interdependence of God and man, and have a clear knowledge, where the beclouded writers of innumerable abstruse volumes have stumbled themselves and caused others to stumble. The theology of Paul was not created in the seclusion of some library or in the debates of some council. It was the result of the hours of communion with God, and he leaves still there the contradictions about which the church has wrangled ever since, because to him they were not contradictions. Nor are they now contradictions to those who find God. Note how Calvinist and Arminian, Baptist and Pedobaptist, Presbyterian and Episcopalian have no difficulty in worshiping together. All disagreements pass. They are all one in Christ Jesus. The normal world, the normal church, the normal individual, will always be where God is, where God remains, where God surrenders himself to all and all surrender to God.

In every sincere act of worship, God must give himself to us. Unless he is there as a reality known by us, there can be no adoration of him. There may be some kind of adoration of some kind of an abstraction of our own making and very much of this there is. Feuerbach has told us that it is man that creates God, and he pictures man as saying unconsciously to himself, "Let us make God in our own image." All this is painfully true of too many, because like Feuerbach they

have refused first of all to surrender themselves to God. Sacred spots grew up as the result of the universal realization that God must be near the worshiper, or there can be no value in the worship. Hence men began to feel that he might be found in one place or another, nearly always where once before, to some one perhaps in the long ago, he had appeared in all his glory. We long once more to sing the old hymns in the little country church of our childhood, or to kneel once more and pray with our mother's hand upon our heads. There may be some one hymn in the singing of which God seems to be very near, just because it is associated with our conversion, or some other momentous hour in our own experience.

God is always near in every clime and in every place.

> "How silently, how silently,
> The wondrous gift is given!
> So God imparts to human hearts
> The blessings of His heaven.
> No ear may hear his coming,
> But in this world of sin,
> Where meek souls will receive Him still,
> The dear Christ enters in."

He must speak, he must shine forth, he is self-revealed. All this is a matter of necessity for him, just as there can be no sun without light, no motion without heat, no motherhood without love. What we call revelation is this Word he is ever speaking because he cannot help himself. And this ought not to surprise us, or be difficult for us to believe or understand, when we know how true it is of ideal men in their varying types. Here are poets who cannot keep from pouring

forth their souls in verse, who do not write primarily for so much a line, but must give expression to that which they are and have seen. And here are painters whose colors are mixed with their heart's blood, and who transfer to the canvas their souls before invisible to the world. Here are patriots who write their names and liberty upon battlefields, because if their bodies do not die there, their souls will surely die elsewhere. Here is a great host of men bound together by a single great truth, which by trumpet and drum and cannon and bugle they send forth through all the world and down through all the ages. The apostles tell their enemies that, in spite of cruel threatenings, they must declare the truth. All this is but the result of the image of God in us, God whose heart and mind are open to the world.

Let us not imagine that God has spoken to only a favored few, has given himself to only great saints and prophets. He does not give to certain favored men his secrets, as we take special friends aside to whisper in their ears, unheard by others, some special piece of information which no one else is supposed ever to hear. In this respect the heroes of the faith and of the truth like Paul, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, have had no advantage over the humblest African or South Sea Islander. The heathen religions are full of grave errors of every sort, and this is true of every one of them. But it is nevertheless true that their founders heard the voice of God, and their devotees hear that voice in some sense to-day. He speaks—it remains for men to listen and to hear. He shows himself—it remains for men to

look and behold. Jesus chided the people of his day for being able to discern the face of the sky, while at the same time they were blind to the signs of the times, and he called them hypocrites. We find illustrations of this great truth outside of the purely spiritual realm. It is said that the song of the steam coming from the boiling kettle led to the invention of the steam engine. It had been singing that same song for centuries in the ears of men, but its best notes had not been listened to. The electric power did not come into existence during the last century. It had stared men in the face from the beginning. They simply failed to see. A painter painted a sunset or a rose, and his canvas brought him a large sum of money from one who had as much right to that sunset or the rose as the painter. In an hour of great sorrow a man's face is lighted with glory and his heart echoes with the voice of God. You had the same sorrow. Did you forget that the same God and the same triumph might have been yours? You sat across the aisle from one who in the spirit of worship heard the angels singing, felt the power of God, recognized a divine message in the plain sermon, and went out to new victories. You had but to look and listen to find that God, for he was in that church for every one who at all desired him.

The prophets are the interpreters of the message. They have a genius, God-given, let us believe, to help us to hear and to understand, to help us find the God who is ever near. They are like the interpreters of nature and of history. The poets help us to see the beauties around us; the astronomers open our eyes

to see the movements of the stars; the musicians snatch from heaven its harmonies and cause us to hear their sweetness; the true historians bid us look out over fields of battle and halls of diplomacy and see "one unceasing purpose" running through it all. Remember, however, that if we were not all of us poets, artists, scientists, historians it would be wholly useless for these interpreters of the world to speak to us at all, and in the end all they do for us is to make us see and hear the things which they have seen and heard. What the great prophets and teachers do for us is what John did for the lookers on, as Jesus passed by, when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God (not Jesus of Nazareth) that taketh away the sins of the world." Others might now look and see the Savior of the race. And great is the need for these prophets. Even where men see and hear, they seriously err. What strange beliefs prevail about the simplest facts of nature, prevail at times in scientific minds or minds that claim to be scientific! What serious results have followed misconceptions about the human body! Heathenism has stood before God and has not known his fatherhood, nor even his personality; like Buddha, in the presence of the great mystery, it has refused even to think seriously about him or to long for him. We who have lived in Christian lands since we were born have read strange meanings into the Word God is ever speaking in our ears, and thought that voices wholly selfish, perhaps imaginary voices, were the voices of Jehovah. This makes the help of great teachers so helpful, and sends us to our Bibles, where we may find the infallible

guides, who, telling us how they found God and what he said, teach us to find him and to hear him.

We must not content ourselves with what the prophet tells us. It is his business just to place us where we can see, and bid us look, until the glory dawns on us. The chemist may tell us in the text-book just what we may expect, if we make certain combinations. But the teacher is not satisfied for us to know it as we find it in the book. We must go into the laboratory, and possibly with some risk to our bodily welfare, make those combinations ourselves, and see with our own eyes the results of which the books speak. In some observatory an astronomer has made some discovery, a new satellite of some planet, an approaching comet, some unusual behavior in a sun-spot. The hundreds of astronomers about the world read the story, but they are not satisfied until they have seen with their own eyes, and confirmed the reported discoveries. The woman of Samaria had learned that the Messiah had come and had reported the blessed truth to the men of the city, but they did not rest, until they had made their own investigation, and had verified her statements. You may read with deepest interest the strange account of wrestling Jacob, or stand in awe before Isaiah's vision in the temple, or come near to John on the lonely Isle of Patmos, when he is in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, but for you is every one of these experiences, and the stories mean very little until they are verified.

It is not always possible for God to give himself to men—it is never easy. The material world cannot resist his entrance. It feels and shows the thrill of his

presence. All nature is in motion. All admit to-day at least this much, that matter is not all, and are ready to say with the Word of God, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God," whatever may be the interpretation given of the meaning of "God." Our bodies in this regard are like the rest of matter. Not only are we fearfully and wonderfully made, but more wonderful is our continuance, the ceaseless throbbing of our hearts. With our souls it is quite different. He cannot force his way. Even if he did in any sense, it would be of no value. Only the things we heartily welcome after all get into our lives. Often have we known men to live in daily contact with each other, perhaps in the same home in the same business, without understanding each other. In his Julius Cæsar, Shakespeare represents Portia, the wife of Brutus, as saying to him,

> "Dwell I but in the suburbs
> Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
> Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife."

Bitter yet real is the cry of the soul as it is expressed in one of our great hymns,

> "O dark, dark, dark, I still must say
> Amid the blaze of gospel day."

Almost under the shadow of the cross, after months of contact with Jesus, Philip asks, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us," and there is a tone of sadness in the reply of Jesus, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Multitudes, who would spurn the idea that they are materialists and atheists, are practically so in spite of what

perchance is their ultra-philosophic and ultra-theological orthodoxy. Not different would be their lives, if there were no God.

Queer is that experience, by no means uncommon, where God has found his way into a soul to-day, but on the morrow gains no entrance. It is more than queer; it is saddening. Too frequently do we have to sing,

> "What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
> How sweet their memory still!
> But they have left an aching void
> The world can never fill."

Ecstatic moments, in which God appears more real than ourselves and heaven seems at our very doors, are likely to be followed by moments of great depression. Or there may be what Phillips Brooks has called "the tides of the Spirit," an ebb and flow in which there may be a wide distance between the lowest ebb and the highest flow. Some of these experiences are perfectly normal, as when there are variations in the warmth and enthusiasm of our religious life. God may be just as truly present, when for the moment enthusiasm does not master our thought and sweep through our emotions and our wills, and we may know that he is present. But unfortunate is it that there should be any hour, when the God, who is ever giving himself to men, is barred from our hearts. There is some difficulty in ourselves in the way—with all our willingness and his, he does not enter, and we spend hours of agony in seeking the explanation. There is no need to seek or to know the reason why. The wiser course is not to study the symptoms, which may make one morbid, just

as one may become by thinking too much of bodily ailments, but to go on with one's religious life and know that God has been near all the while.

> "Speak to Him, Thou, for He hears
> And Spirit with Spirit may meet."

The earnestness with which God seeks to give himself to men is the most blessed truth found anywhere in the Bible. A very familiar passage in the Twenty-third Psalm might be well translated thus, "Only goodness and mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life." This quite probably means that God in his love and mercy is pursuing us, is always after us, with all the relentlessness and determination of a detective. Were it not for the evidence all around us, evidence in our own lives, we should contend that it is incredible that God should have thus to be keeping always on our track. This will mean that all that enters into our lives—sunshine and flowers, storm and earthquake, gain and loss, success and failure—has in it the divine presence seeking, through these things in which he clothes himself to work his way into our secret selves. The mother of the boy so hard to wake up in the morning resorts to various means to arouse him. She calls gently, she calls loudly, she lays her hand on him and shakes him, she plays the victrola with the loud needle, she kisses him with many kisses. By some means she at last succeeds, but it is not easy. Here is a man who does not love the better music—it bores him. What shall we do with that man? Reason with him? Abuse him with harsh epithets? Tell him of the

great men who have created this music? Or of the great men who have found their best recreation and chief pleasure in music? The better way will be to place him if possible where the music may still pursue him, so that hearing it over and over again, being human, which means among other things being musical, he may make a place in his soul for these heavenly strains. Is not this what we do with ourselves in the time of worship? And we are in the presence of the seeking God with sympathetic, even expectant hearts. We too are divine and we must at last be found of God.

And what is the worship of the sanctuary, or the worship of the lonely soul in some quiet place, but God's appointed way of placing us where he may best seek us, best give himself to us? All at once our eyes are opened and we behold him within the most sacred precincts of our souls. At last he has found us. He has brought to us his boundlessness, his greatness, his love. We say not with the wicked king, as he beholds the prophet whom he fears, "Hast thou found me, O my enemy?" We cry out, "Thou hast found me. Thou hast laid thy hand upon me. Thou shalt never leave me." We make the words of Sidney Lanier our own:

"As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God, as the marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod,
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn."

If in haunts of doubtful pleasure, in the trickeries and short cuts of certain kinds of business, in the ways of the flippant unbeliever, the devil finds his victims, and we may think of him as turning his feet thitherward when the ranks are full, we may well say that in the place of prayer, the worship of the church God seeks those to whom he will reveal himself and give himself. And it is assuredly true that many stay away from church, because they fear that God may find them, and they do not wish to make the surrender which may be required of them. Where the hungry soul kneels in deep longing for rest and satisfaction, he comes. "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." To such he gladly surrenders: to such he gives himself.

There are times when God is very near. We err in the belief so often indulged in that now he is peculiarly gracious, now he is speaking with a peculiar eloquence unknown at other seasons. God's message always waits upon our readiness to receive it. Jesus said to the men who had been so near to him, had heard him speak and seen the miracles, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." When at last some great truth dawns on the world, the wonder is why it had not been fully seen and appreciated, for it is at once evident that it has been here all the while. It matters little how the case may be stated, whether it is said, God has been always speaking the same old truths and the people do not hear, or that he speaks his Word as men are prepared to receive it. The essential thing is that the delay is not due to God, but to us.

What floods of glory, what marvels of grace, what untold strength, what secrets, might come to mankind in any age! We are not straitened in God; we are straitened in our own bowels. We are always charging up our ignorance and helplessness to God. We speak of his set time to favor Zion, as if he were whimsical about it. This attitude is to a large extent the remains of the old heathen conception of prayer and sacrifice, that the Deity must, by various means, be cajoled into doing favors. To this end self-torture or gifts or both might help. What a contrast to this is the question asked by the apostle, "God who spared not His own Son, but freely delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The Christian worshiper, as he turns his face to the cross, must know that he is in the presence of the infinite mercies of God.

We do know, however, that we are at times more conscious of God's presence than at others. Look at John Wesley, a member of the Holy Club at Oxford, or conducting the services of the church in Savannah, and John Wesley in the little chapel in London where he felt his heart strangely warmed. And there is Martin Luther climbing the *Scala Sancta* at Rome, and Martin Luther when all at once there sounds through his inmost soul the words on which the Reformation was built, "The Just shall live by Faith." Here is Romanes, now wandering through all the paths of nature and coming back to tell us that nowhere has he discovered God, but, in later days, finding him in the heavens and in the earth and under the earth and even

in a room of suffering and approaching dissolution. The preacher, with his well-prepared sermon, will to-day be so overshadowed and inspired by the divine presence that his thoughts are the thoughts of God, and his voice is but the organ through which God gives his message, while his heart bounds with joy in the utterance. With the same text and the same outline before him, on some other occasion, this same preacher labors and beats the air and is overwhelmed with a sense of God's departure from him. God may be so near to us, that we may say, with James Martineau, that we are not so sure of our own existence as we are of God's, while another, under similar conditions and with the very same training and the same general outlook, is in the densest darkness without God and without hope. We are reminded of Tyndall's assertion that certain sounds easily distinguishable by some ears, are not heard by others, who have no trace of deafness whatever. And these two contrary experiences have come to most of us at different seasons. Mr. Beecher tells us how once, at a flag unfurling at which he was to deliver the address, as he looked at the flag just turned to the breezes, he burst into tears and all the vast audience with him, that flag which he had so viewed at other times, no doubt without any emotion.

Churches sometimes have a special realization of the presence of God. It is as though all at once the place so much of the time dull and uninteresting, had become the Shechinah. I am not now speaking of revival seasons only, but also of red letter days of special blessing and special exultation, when preacher and choir and

congregation all know that God is in the place. Such incidents are as often as otherwise to human minds inexplicable,—only the fact is evident. For each one present, the preacher, the people, all fade away; only God is seen and felt. It is as when the setting sun, with indescribable beauty, lights up old barns and shacks and fields that have lost their fertility—the glory of the sun is all.

Through the centuries, similar experiences have come to the universal church. In one age God is hidden as in an eclipse; in the following century new light breaks forth from his throne, from his face. There have been great seasons of revival, the days of Wesley and Whitefield, the days of Jonathan Edwards, of the McGee brothers, of Dwight L. Moody, and of Sam Jones. There have been days of creed and doctrine formulation when God was near to reveal his truth to men, and statements of faith came into existence of great value, which have been and will be more or less permanent. There have been periods of missionary endeavor and progress, such as came with Carey and Judson and Coke and these days of new enthusiasm for the world's salvation. The missionary spirit is always the result of a new vision of the great heart of God.

In heathen lands also there are remarkable evidences of the nearness of God, not only in larger results of mission work, but also in the dissatisfaction with the old forms of religion, and in the effort to find a place for God and Christian teaching in the newer forms. They have a dim vision of the face of the universal Father, and need some one to interpret to them that

vision. Often the question forces itself upon us, Will not the veil which is over the face of the world soon fall away, that there may come the clearer vision? A most interesting fact is the frequent wrestling through many generations past with the same momentous problems of philosophy and religion in lands widely distant from each other, among peoples of differing cultures and different religious faith. They were undoubtedly seeking a God whom they somehow felt to be near, and to them we might apply the words of Pascal, "Thou wouldst not seek me, if thou hadst not known me." In all this we may find an application of the words of Paul to the Galatian churches, "In the fullness of time God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law."

These hours, when God seems so near, should be the subject of our earnest study and investigation, that we may if possible learn how to make them the rule, rather than the exception, in our lives. Eclipses, transits of Venus, and other physical phenomena, are subjected to scientific scrutiny, even at the cost of money and long journeys. Men seize upon the fading colors of the sunset, that they may make them their permanent possession, through paint and canvas. A few lines dimly inscribed on some clay tablet in the East is carefully deciphered. Here are things for our research far more important. What do we learn from such a study? Under what conditions or circumstances has God's nearness been so real? In all such instances, human nature has been permitted to express its deeper desires and needs. It has been restrained neither by

sedatives, nor by ridicule, nor by argument. The emotions have been considered as trustworthy as the intellect, because they are a part of our humanity, and have been given us by God. There has been an utter weariness with all human devices to bring quietness and peace to the soul that has by some misfortune missed or lost the Father. There has been no effort by men to commend themselves to God, on the ground of any goodness or any great deeds; but solely on the basis of the rights of children under the redemption of Jesus Christ, has the Father been asked to show his face. The things between them and God have been removed—and there he stood. The veil is taken away. "But if our Gospel be veiled, it is veiled in them that are perishing: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

God is always near—and we know him to be near—in sincere worship. Then it is he easily enters into us and our affairs. We so often mingle other things with our worship. The services on the Lord's Day put worship in the secondary place. Many preachers call the worship the preliminaries. The laymen come in at any time up to the sermon, feeling that there is no breach of propriety, provided they are there in time for the announcement of the text. Few preachers make careful preparation for the worship, and the sermon with those who do not is not considered as a part of this communion with God. The reaction against the demand for conformity by the English

Church led the dissenting bodies, in their surrender of the English prayer-book, to the opposite extreme, and the Methodists have been greatly influenced by the spirit of dissent. Thus we have, on the one hand, the placing of the sermon in the position of minor importance, until in some instances it passes away entirely; on the other hand, the sermon is everything and the worship is reduced to such a minimum that it had almost as well be omitted. Neither is scriptural. Neither is ideally helpful. There must be the proper balancing of the sermon and the worship. But in every case the worship itself should be a message, and the sermon should be worship. In other words, the whole hour in God's house should be worship, and the whole hour should be sermon. The aim of it all is to make it easy for God to enter, and if he has entered, to enter more fully. It is interesting and instructive to read and to hear the incidents in the lives of certain scholarly men, who have wandered in darkness, while they read the vast literature on the subject of theism, but at last have thrown themselves down on their faces crying, "O God, if there be a God, hear my prayer," and in that cry have known God to be at hand.

When once God has entered, life is never again what it was before, and we can never again be content without him. We have merely human experiences resembling this. Friends, loved ones, become a part of ourselves, and when they leave us, we say that only half of us remains on this side of the river, and we have more to live for in the beyond. I knew a husband and wife who were quite worldly, and were more than

happy, as they themselves said, that no child had come into their home to interfere with their rounds of pleasure. But, after ten years of married life, a babe did come, a babe they did not anticipate with any delight. But after his arrival he mastered the home, and from his little throne he brought the worldly ways to a close. After a year, the Lord who had given him took him away. A well executed portrait of the child was hung on the wall. There, as at a shrine, the father and mother spent much of their time, and they often spoke of the wondrous attractiveness of heaven. There is no more beautifully tender scene in all the Bible than when Mary Magdalene, for whom Jesus had done so much, missing the body to which she desired so much to minister, said, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." Equally beautiful is the conversation of the two who met Jesus, their eyes being holden, as they were on the way to Emmaus, and told him the story of their Lord's death and how heartbroken they were.

If God has ever entered our lives in truth and we know the joy of that wonderful experience, we shall wish him to stay. If we shall miss him for any reason, or wander from him, we shall desire to have him back again, and shall do anything to bring this to pass. We shall be disturbed as much as Mary was that day, when she did not find Jesus in the company with which she was journeying toward her home. There is just that much truth in the much discussed dogma, "Once in grace, always in grace." It is not true that men are

chosen for righteousness and heaven or for unrighteousness and hell, and must by a divine ordering, however they may wander, drift back to their appointed places. But it is true, that the joy of the highest Christian experience is likely to hold men true to God and to draw their erring feet back again to the Father's house. I call to mind a man, once eminent as a preacher in the Methodist Church, who went off into an immoral life, leaving the church as well as the ministry. In the midst of his wild career, he was offered a goodly sum to deliver a lecture against the doctrines of Christianity after the order of Mr. Ingersoll's. He refused, saying he knew too well the truth of the Gospel by a personal experience, and he meant one day to return to his former life, and he did.

Great hours, great crises, come into many lives, when God is near in a sense well-nigh extraordinary or miraculous. It is indeed fortunate, if this should be true. We do not need to define these experiences by theological terms, or base on them rules which may be followed in order to obtain them, or to make them the ground for criticism of others or dictation to them. But here we begin to date a new era in our history, and we look back to find here the assurance that we may all the while have God with us, God with all the riches of his grace. And in these great days, we live more in a day or an hour than in a whole year. There is an unfolding of character beyond all former experiences. Truth is learned which no amount of research could have given, truth the value and the riches of which it takes us years fully to appreciate. We dare ap-

proaches to God and holy, reverent intimacies with God we did not before dream to be possible. This is the explanation of the impression made on us by sermons we have heard and never forget. Not always were they so remarkable, but they were the occasion of some special revelation of God to us. We say, "That was the greatest sermon that I ever heard."

We should have many such exalted moments in our devotional life. It is our weakness that we should satisfy ourselves with one, and henceforth live there in memory at least. Not even of the mount of transfiguration was it right that the disciples should say, "Let us make here three tabernacles." Let us consider the limitless possibilities of our own spiritual natures. It is well for us to have such a knowledge of ourselves in the face of Jesus Christ, that, without hesitation, we may adopt Paul's boast, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" or pray his prayer, "to know the knowledge-surpassing love of God." And let us also consider the infinite nature of God. What poor thoughts we have of God, if we come to believe that any saint that ever lived has sounded the depths of his love. The Bible is the Word of God, but of that inspired book Robinson, bidding the Pilgrim Fathers farewell, said truly, "There is new light yet to break forth from God's Word." Let us therefore ever go into the presence of God, expecting some new surprises.

"Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing in His wings;

When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining,
To cheer it after rain."

Yes, we are surprised, but not startled, not alarmed. Whatever comes to us from the divine presence, we feel perfectly at home in the possession of it. Let us be "willing in the day of his power" and let us not anywhere, least of all in ourselves, "limit the Holy One of Israel." Let us ask for God's gifts "above all we ask or think."

We get God and all great things by self-surrender. Note the contrast between two famous New Testament characters. There was Judas who used Jesus for the accomplishment of his own ends of greed and unholy ambition, for position and power, and who, when he found the Master no longer of any further use to him, sold him for the price fixed by the Mosaic law for a common slave. The whole record shows that, in spite of his nearness to Jesus, being not only an apostle, but the treasurer of the little company, the beauty and sweetness of Jesus never dawned upon him nor was his character in the smallest degree influenced by the association. Not for one moment did he own the real Christ. On the contrary, Paul delighted to call himself the slave of the Lord Jesus, and said that he bore in his body brands which attested the ownership. He did not know Christ after the flesh, but his insight into the character of Jesus, his conception of his personality, the enrichment and unfolding of his own mind and heart by the spiritual contact with his unseen

Lord, constitute one of the richest legacies of the Christian Church. He did win Christ, as he longed to do, but he won Christ because he had made the complete surrender. He no longer lived: Christ lived in him. These are striking illustrations of a great truth. But the history of the Church is full of records like these. We speak of the heroes of the faith; we might call them just as well the heroes of self-surrender. Those who have most truly owned Jesus, have given their lives wholly to him, have thought of no gain except the gain of him, men like Livingstone and Grenfell and Patteson, and women like Mary Read. They gave all to God; they got all back and God.

This rule does not govern in our religious life alone. No great thing is ever obtained except by the same process. Only in so far as we give ourselves up to music or painting or scenes in nature, do we really get these things. The story is told of a man who once entered a hall, where the great orator Prentiss was speaking, and took out his watch to time the speaker. At the close of the address he looked at his watch and found he had stood for two hours, with his hand in the same position holding the open watch. Whatever was worth the having in that address that man had through all the coming days. No artist can do his best work who follows his calling just for pay. He must be the slave of art, not of gold. A painter poor and hungry was offered a large sum by a patent medicine vendor for a beautiful rainbow scene at the close of a storm, with the understanding that over the painting was to be stamped in glaring letters the name of the medicine.

All night the painter considered the offer, for he needed money for almost everything. The coming of the day brought the victory. "No," he said, "I cannot be untrue to my calling. When I paint for ends like this, my skill will go. I shall one day have bread and meat enough." The cry heard so much to-day, "Art for art's sake," is true, if properly understood. On the lips of those who most commonly use it, it means "art for the sake of gold," or "for the sake of lust," or "for the sake of the ignorant, wicked crowd." One of the greatest hindrances to genuine scholarship is the insistence on vocational training, on the value of learning only in so far as it helps to make for us a livelihood. The true scholar has given his heart to the truth, to follow whithersoever it leads, through evil as well as good report.

The church, religion, Jesus Christ himself are so generally looked upon as assets in the various businesses of the world. A land company is selling lots in a "boom" town. Among the inducements offered, we find the statement that the leading denominations have lots and will begin building at once. A professional man moves to another city, and at once looks for the church of the largest wealth and the largest numbers, and gives himself to active service there. A great corporation builds a church in the midst of its employees, because it will help to keep them satisfied, and because it is a good police power. A painter paints the face of Jesus, the scenes in his life, the cross on which he died, the resurrection, the Madonna and child, not because of any devotion to Jesus, but because there

are no such subjects for art as these; and Jesus is but little more than the model who in another section of his work gives him what he needs for the completion of his dream. Church music may be written, indeed has been written, by men who could not therefore call themselves the servants of the Lord Jesus, but who sought to make the Lord Jesus their servant. Many there are who claim to be saved according to the orthodox plan of salvation, but whose one idea of salvation is that they may be kept out of the pains of a medieval hell, and may live forever in the joys of a medieval heaven. They do as little for Christ as they can to gain this end; they give as little as they can. They often go as near to the brink of moral and spiritual ruin as they dare. Very different is the yearning of Paul after his brethren, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen acording to the flesh."

> "Then why, O blessed Jesus Christ,
> Should I not love Thee well?
> Not for the hope of winning heaven,
> Nor for escaping hell;
> Not with the hope of gaining aught,
> Not seeking a reward;
> But as Thyself hast loved me
> O ever-loving Lord."

Jesus is still saying, "Go sell that thou hast. . . . And come follow me."

Here is a loss which is also a gain, yes, more gain than loss. It is as though a man should haul a block of stone to a sculptor's studio. He leaves it there for a season. When he returns, half of it is gone. But

see the transformation. It is an angel now, and the scraps of stone and the marble dust are worthless. Jesus said, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in the present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Such a man when he comes to the place of prayer, finds God with ease. He is in the right attitude to hear his voice, to see his glory. He is like the man who being always in the homiletic mood, the supreme ambition of his life, finds sermons and illustrations everywhere, or like the poet who sees poems hanging like fruit waiting to be plucked on every flower and star and sunset. At the same time he is moved to larger consecration, larger self-surrender. He sees the beauty of the Lord and tastes the sweetness of his goodness, and before such a vision splendid, as by an impulse, for the time almost unreasoning, he gives himself. And so self-surrender gives us God in the hour of worship, and the vision of God leads to self-surrender. Thus God is more and more to us, and we are more and more to God and to ourselves.

Self-surrender, or the attempt at it, is of little value, unless we desire to be mastered by God for those ends which with him are supreme. The history of the church is painfully instructive here. We see a long column of religious leaders, perfectly sincere most of them, who have sought to give themselves to the full control of the church and of Jesus Christ, carrying the cross before them for a multitude of purposes utterly out of harmony with that cross. Here are the crusaders,

who sought by force to take the Holy Land from the hands of the Turk. There stands the inquisition, set up for the purpose of forcing men into the kingdom of Jesus, for their own eternal good, by church leaders, who believed they had the sanction of Jesus in those words of the parable of the Great Supper, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in." The extreme mystic finds a strange, weird pleasure in having his identity merged in the eternal, universal essence, very much as the pantheistic Hindu looks, at the end of many rebirths, to find himself swallowed up by Brahma. Not a few seek for themselves greatness and glory of a religious or spiritual sort. Their ambitions are akin to the ambitions of those seeking applause through the achievements of scholarship or political power, for greatness is usually desired in the field of those things in which men find their chief employment and their more frequent associations. With yet others the aim is almost wholly ecclesiastical. Dependent on certain very definite, quite often narrow, statements of dogma, they spend their days with a self-denial, in some respects quite commendable, in what they consider a defense of the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Within the compass of their own denomination, and sometimes nowhere else, they find all of God and all of the truth, for which they are willing to live and to die.

Never yet has any man truly found God with conceptions and ambitions like these. It is saddening to read the biographies of men prominent in the annals of the church, and see how they lacked the spirit of our

great Teacher, and were without the presence of the other Paraclete. In the church in North Africa, which attained in the early centuries such phenomenal strength, and which produced such a great theological literature under names still famous, we miss almost entirely the missionary note, and are not much surprised to learn that here the Mohammedan forces gained one of their first great victories, practically destroying the church there. By methods which would be thought reprehensible among politicians to-day, in the interest of ecclesiasticism rather than of the truth, Cyril of Alexandria succeeded in driving Nestorius from the Church, while Nestorius and his followers, whose greatest crime was their refusal to speak of Mary as the Mother of God, became the great missionary leaders in the East. The dark ages found the church, in its monasteries, giving up its time to fine-spun metaphysical distinctions, and in its worship indulging in methods and theories more akin to heathen magic than to the simple program of the New Testament. The doctrines of transubstantiation and of tactual succession were held to be the doctrines of a standing or a falling Church. Those who still enjoyed communion with God, whether inside the Church or outside of it, were held for the most part in disrepute. All through the period of the Reformation we have numerous illustrations of the same truth. The persecutors of Luther, Zwingli and the rest thought they were doing God service, as they gave themselves, with an enthusiasm at times fanatical, to the deliverance of the Church from the heretics and their heresies. Many

of the opponents of the Wesleys, in days of great indifference to spiritual things, when the deists were putting God far off from the world and its affairs on a distant throne, imagined they were consecrating their lives to the highest of ideals in seeking to rid England of what they believed to be an unreasonable and unreasoning enthusiasm. Under conditions like these, not altogether unknown in more recent times, these words are quite often applicable, "The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision."

We must know who this God is and what, to whom we make our surrender, so that we shall know for what we are giving ourselves away, and this we can know by looking into the face of Jesus Christ, and in no other way. He is the God of service. He lives not to be ministered unto but to minister. As he brings the sunbeams to our windows every morning, having neither slumbered nor slept, so he furnishes his back on which to pile our burdens and day by day supplies all our needs. He is the God of the cross, not of that cross as we see it in the crucifixes of the Church of Rome, but the cross which has long ceased to appear feeble and insignificant, the dwelling-place of a dead Christ, a regnant cross, a cross on the throne, the announcement of the sure triumph over all mere force of sacrificial love. He is the God of redemption, pledged to deliver the believer from the power and effects and penalty of sin. He is the God of fulfillment. This is to the front in the teaching of Jesus, "He came not to destroy, but to fulfill," to fill out, to fill full,

the longings of human hearts expressed, so far as the Jews were concerned, in their law and their prophets. but expressed, not alone there, but in all the philosophies and religions of the world. When we come to worship God and therefore to surrender ourselves to him, we are giving ourselves to these ideals, and so doing we shall know his presence and feel that he is giving himself to us. If we are thinking of a life, whether his or ours, altogether selfish, if we imagine that there is a way to God or our own real selves, which has no *via dolorosa,* no Gethsemane, no Calvary, if we decide still to hold on to some of our sins and believe that holiness, except for a very few, is impossible, if we think of life, whether in ourselves or in the world at large, as having reached its largest measure of development, we had as well go our way until these questions are definitely settled, for whatever our ambitions and our thoughts otherwise may be, our ears will be deaf to the voice of God. But the soul which comes near to the God of Jesus Christ will be filled with all his fullness.

The throne of grace is the place where Christian unity, the unity of the race, is a verity. This is perhaps not too wide an application to make of the stanza of a much used hymn,

> "There is a scene where spirits blend,
> Where friend holds fellowship with friend;
> Though sundered far, by faith they meet
> Around one common mercy seat."

Divisive things do not divide true worshipers. It is a vain thing to hope for unity by way of doctrinal agree-

ment, uniformity in the administration of sacraments or other ordinances, or recognition of any church as having any authority above any other church. The very contention for unity on such a basis, however well meant, destroys the higher spirituality of the Church. Most inspiring was the sight of people of all creeds coming together during the war in the camps and elsewhere, especially in great emergencies to pray for the help of the one God and Father of us all, and to coöperate in some most needful service. In those moments God seemed very near and faith was greatly strengthened. Pentecostal scenes are often witnessed on the mission fields, in those great gatherings of the missionaries of all the Churches for prayer and conference, and with the desire to remove all the causes of friction created by minor differences.

Of little value are the things which are not needful to that worship which gives us to God and God to us. We see how much that we have in our religious beliefs and customs can well be given up, and in many cases to the advantage of the religious life. We learn where the place of emphasis is, and this is a most valuable discovery. Here too we are to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Everywhere, but most of all in religion, is it important to put first things first. Here numbers meet with success and numbers fail. These essentials bind all Christian hearts together; it is the non-essentials that divide. We may well dream of the day, when the disciples of Jesus going forth from the altars where they have been engaged in worship and communion with God, will say, "After all

we are one and did not know it. We are all one in Christ Jesus."

These are the ecstatic hours. We are prone to decry ecstasy, especially in religion. There is an ecstasy worthless and even dangerous. It resembles the experiences of extreme oriental mystics. Emotional excitability may have no relation to any divine revelation or influence. It may be the result of influences largely, if not wholly physical, and may come out of an unbalanced neurotic temperament. The literature of the East abounds in rules for producing such states, rules which are in no sense religious. Among certain Christian sects, and with a few others in every branch of the Christian Church, the same states are created by rules unconsciously followed, but based upon exactly the same psychological principles used by the heathen mystics. In such cases reason is laid aside, not only as needless, but also as unworthy of use in such a sublime hour, and is in the way of the achievement of the most complete union with God. God is thought of as revealing himself in words almost audible, making known his will as to specific lines of conduct, often in contravention of all the plans agreed upon by his people in the carrying forward of the work of his kingdom. Sad to say too often the message supposed to be received from out of the skies would lay aside the most fundamental requirements of the moral law, and for this reason, as well as because of temperamental peculiarities, the ecstatic is guilty of acts most unclean, for which he may find it easy to excuse himself. Where the life is essentially moral

and clean, the ecstasy may have no vital connection with the best of the life, and it may therefore neither contribute any of its own force, if indeed it has any, nor does it receive into itself the energy of the rest of the soul.

We know, however, that the greatest deeds of men do not come from cold calculation but by absolute abandonment to great ideals, to great demands. Here is Jonathan, contrary to orders and in the face of what would appear ordinary common sense, and certainly military sense, going up with his armor-bearer against the enemy and winning the victory which no one could have foreseen. Here is Elijah with his most extraordinary and daring test on Mt. Carmel. Luther goes to Worms as if into the jaws of death, not fearing though there should be as many devils there as tiles on the roofs of the houses. John G. Paton faces danger the most terrible and the most evident, with a fearlessness which at times seems almost fanatical, and escapes. Livingstone goes through Africa to the very last with a sublime recklessness as far as his own safety and comfort are concerned, and accomplishes for Africa what no other methods, however wisely planned, could have brought to pass. The maps of Africa everywhere have marked upon them the place where he died, while upon his knees, holding out his hands to God in prayer and to the Christian world, nay to the whole world, in pleading for aid for the people whom he so much loved. In this spirit the really heroic things are done on battlefields to-day; firemen rescue women and children from burning buildings;

and boys their drowning companions in the surf. Then it is the very best in us comes forth, the hidden treasure of the soul. Energies we did not know we possessed, knowledge which we thought had for us long ago passed into oblivion, insight which appears to be a momentary gift from some supernatural source.

God's hands on our souls bring out the best. In no other way is it done. There must at last come to us a supernatural power. It is one of our great misfortunes that for the most part those things, those individuals which enter into our fellowship either strike discordant notes or hush the very music of our souls. Neither do we nor our friends ever hear what we are capable of. Some years ago there moved next to us a couple possessing large wealth made rapidly and by questionable methods. The new, young wife, who had been a cigarette girl, had bought a new piano, the chief value of which to her was that it had cost a very large sum of money, that it was the most costly piano in town. She employed a music teacher and began to torture her neighbors day after day with her practicing. But one day new sounds came out of that home. What had happened to that piano? Had the girl been transformed? No, a visitor had dropped in from somewhere, a master in music, and at last the piano had a chance to show that it was more than a rosewood case, more than the investment of a large sum of money. So it is a new life when God takes us in hand. At times we blunder, but we ultimately reach the truth, and our blundering has on it the stamp of our greatness. How startled we are when a group of fishermen

begin to talk with Jesus about dominions and powers.

Ecstatic experiences are not necessarily untrustworthy. When the whole soul enters into the worship, the experiences are the most reliable we have. We have a right to believe that our dreams will come true, that there is a reality back of our visions. Indeed here is the best kind of certainty—the certainty within—"Christ in you the hope of glory." It is only that which enters into us, becomes a part of ourselves, we feel to be true. This is the kind of certainty which moves us to action, and gives us joy and peace. We are not trusting to experiences which other men have had, not even those recorded in the Bible.

> "What we have felt and seen
> With confidence we tell;
> And publish to the sons of men
> The signs infallible."

The power which is to move the world, which is to correct the evils of the day, and bring in the kingdom of Jesus Christ is to come from the midst of a united Church, united in spirit and in all the essential things of the faith, on its knees in prayer. The same ecstatics will conquer the world for our Redeemer, and the Gospel is to be made known to the world not so much by lives of Christ, and doctrinal statements, as by the revelations made by those who have been with Jesus and learned of him.

We may imagine we have made the surrender to God, just because he is constantly so near, so constantly, out of the necessities of his nature, is giving himself, almost forcing himself, upon us, is speaking

to us in words we cannot help hearing. We may be greatly stirred by these experiences, when as yet God has no real, certainly no permanent hold upon us. King Saul, with a heart not yet freed, indeed never to be freed, from its grossly evil tendencies, is so overwhelmed by the sense of God's presence with the sons of the prophet that he is seized as by a rhapsody until the people ask, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" Most of us have been deeply stirred by some warm religious service only to find ourselves on the morrow in the vale without any sense of God's presence. Evidently we did not after all give ourselves to him. Many things thus enter partially or for a season into our path which have no great control over us. You view from the rear of an observation car the hills and rivers and gigantic trees and other wondrous beauties, all fit for an artist's brush. You are entertained, refreshed, uplifted, but you are not an artist, you do not hang the pictures on which you have gazed in the gallery of your soul. You visit some manufacturing plant, and are deeply interested, even to the point of wonderment, in the machinery, the exhibition of power and skill, the goods which are produced. But you have no capital invested in the concern, you are not a purchaser of such goods as you see, and you are not long in losing your interest even to the forgetfulness of all that once surprised you. You hear at a concert, which cost you a small sum of money, a program of truly great music. Some of it you greatly appreciate, and it brings real sweetness into the routine of life for a few days. Some of it you know is the very best

because experts tell you and because it was written by Mozart, Beethoven, Gounod, and others like them. But you are not made a musician and in time these harmonies seem to die away in the distance.

We need to make the surrender to God again and again, until it is a habit, an overmastering habit, if we would find God in the largest sense and have his perpetual leadership.

> "High heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
> That vow renewed shall daily hear,
> Till in life's latest hour I bow,
> And bless in death a bond so dear."

Paderewski tells how when he was in a small German city some years ago, he passed a house on which was a sign, "Lessons on the piano by Miss Marie Brown." Miss Brown was at that time giving a lesson and giving it incorrectly. Paderewski was moved to walk into her studio, told her wherein she was blundering, and showed how it ought to be done. Some few years afterwards, he was in the same city and, walking down the same street, saw the same sign, which now read, "Lessons on the piano given by Miss Marie Brown, a pupil of Paderewski." Do we not come to God to find him once in some great experience, or perhaps a few times, and think we have gained his great, loving self? We refer to the days gone by, when we did have some revelation of him, some sense of his saving power, and we act and speak as though this were enough. The soul is so used to contact with the material and the transient, that it is needful if it would get any great advantage out of fellowship with

God, that it should grow accustomed to the divine presence and to the divine voice, and so recognize God when he is peculiarly near, and be able to endure his glory. This is what is meant by the oft-used phrase once the title of a book, *Practicing the Presence of God.*

There are not a few ways in which we may test the genuineness of our surrender to God. Partly may the test be made in the world in connection with the hold the earthly things have upon us. Do they consume our time, our interest? Can we find our rest here? Do we prefer the house of God to all other places just because it is the Father's House? When in the place of worship, what engages our attention? The musical performance and the eloquence of the sermon, or the vision of the shechinah glory? What voices silence all the rest? Is this our prayer?

> "Descend, celestial Dove,
> With all Thy quickening powers;
> Disclose a Savior's love,
> And bless the sacred hours;
> Then shall my soul new life obtain
> Nor Sabbaths be enjoyed in vain."

But let no one be discouraged if at first God seems at times far away, and if there should come over him the conviction that he may not have made the surrender to God. We have but to give ourselves a chance at God, and God a chance at us, because we are so akin, to bring at last a permanent fellowship.

Here, then, is the ultimate content of the religious life—to belong to God and thereby to own God. There

are many fruits of this blessed union; but these come as a matter of course, and they take care of themselves. We do not need to worry about them. How beautifully Jesus presented this truth in his great message, "I am the vine; ye are the branches." "Apart from me, ye can do nothing." This union is consummated not by personal effort, not by reasoning, not by the magical effect of a sacrament, not by some good deed, however worthy. It is consummated in the hour when the soul comes into personal fellowship with God in perfect abandon, the hour of worship. For God has already given himself with this great abandon. In the third chapter of John's Gospel we have two remarkable statements. In the sixteenth verse we read, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." In the thirty-fourth verse we are told, omitting the words supplied by the translators, "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure." So here is the perpetual outpouring of the whole Trinity upon mankind. It is the gift of infinite love to the children, a gift in which each one stands before God as if he were an only child. Each time we worship we are coming back, but not as prodigals, to the Father's house —and all he has is ours.

Lecture III

THE HINDRANCES TO WORSHIP

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PERHAPS we can find no better statement of these hindrances to religion and especially to sincere worship than the words of John in his first epistle (2: 15-17) "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." It is the world on its transient side, especially as it is made the center of thought and affection, of which John speaks. Augustine says, "Let the Spirit of God be in thee that thou mayest see that all these things are good; but woe to thee if thou love created things and forsake the Creator. . . . If a bridegroom made a ring for the bride, and when she got it, she were fonder of the ring than of the bridegroom who made the ring for her, would not an adulterous spirit be detected in the very gift of the bridegroom, however she might love what the bridegroom gave? . . . God gave thee all those things: love him who made them." (Quoted in Expositor's Greek Testament.) Worldliness is the one great hindrance to the religious living

of professing Christians, and it is not easy to define. Have we not here the best possible description of it?

First, it is the lust of the flesh. This is a subjective genitive. The lust of the flesh is the flesh lusting, the carnal nature with its carnal desires. It has been frequently noted that this corresponds to the first temptation of Jesus, "Command that these stones be made bread." To make bread was not wrong. He afterwards multiplied loaves and fishes and turned water into wine. To eat bread when hungry was not wrong. He went to many a feast both with Pharisees and publicans. It was a question of the place of bread and the making of it in his life. Hence Jesus immediately replied, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." In another place, he had said to the people, "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto life eternal." Of course, they were to provide meat for themselves, but the stress was not to be there. All fleshly things were to be in subjection to the spiritual, which was to be supreme.

Not without reason do the physical and material figure so extensively in all religions. Indeed this is a most interesting study. Sometimes we are told that all material things, including our bodies, are mere phantasms. This view must indicate a contempt for all such appearances, a confidence that they have no value, that they are hindrances and not helps. We have a modern sect which in its desire to magnify the spiritual has taken the same extreme position. In order that the material things shall not interfere, we

must imagine them out of existence. Again we are told that there can be no doubt of the existence of the material world. Indeed its existence is terribly real, for it is the seat of all sin and misery, and this is particularly true of our bodies. It becomes necessary to punish our bodies and to deny ourselves all earthly joy in order to find God. This, too, has stolen into certain forms of Christianity. To what agonies of every sort have men subjected their bodies in order to be saved! There must be utter detachment from the body and this material world. In one of the greatest of the non-Christian religions, the most prominent teaching is that all evil came into the world through the material side, and that a warfare thus begun continues, and must continue, until the consummation of all things through a process largely miraculous. Scarcely a new movement has come into the church without some connection with the material side of things, indicating an appreciation of some real difficulty. We have had socialistic or communistic movements seeking to prevent either poverty or riches, the wearing of some plain garb or some similar dress of a peculiar sort, the giving up of every form of amusement, the practice of celibacy by all who would lead the higher forms of Christian life.

All the way through this history we must be impressed both with the folly of the things attempted and with the results that have been achieved, but we must be convinced that in every case there has been the sense of a grave problem. For some reason it is true that our religious life must early solve the prob-

lem, and put in its proper place the flesh with all the accompaniments of the fleshy life. It is certainly a great error to say the flesh itself is evil. Do we not know the flesh was made by God? Who can study his body with all its possibilities, yes, even with its passions and appetites in their proper place, without feeling he is in the very presence of God? John does not say the flesh, but the lust of the flesh, the flesh lusting, seeking an improper place in the life. The flesh decides all the movements of life, and life in its higher aspects must bow to its bidding and enlarge the scope of its pleasure and control. A weird short story of a great American writer represents the inmates of an insane asylum shutting the keeper into a cell, refusing all his pleas for release, and taking control of all the affairs of the institution. This is a picture of what may happen to our spirits in the grip of the flesh.

It is no simple thing to locate properly the things of the flesh, to put them in their proper place in our lives. There are two easy roads to the solution, to insist that everything, every creature of God, is good and go ahead and enjoy it, or to give it all up and be of the number of those who abide in the temple with no thought except of things religious. And these two schemes have been adopted quite frequently, just because they are simple and more or less easily applied. There is but one answer to every question here. The spiritual, heavenly, diviner life must be made supreme, and all material things must be no more than the body for such a soul, and no definite rules like old-time cases of conscience or specific ecclesiastical regulations may

well be laid down. Some material expression there must be. We are reminded of that much quoted passage in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

"The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven:
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

The poet's dream needs words well-chosen to give to it an outward form and reality; the poet may be a wizard with words present by thousands in the lexicon before him, but he uses comparatively few and escapes the danger of having his dream destroyed by too many of them. What he leaves out is as important as what he chooses for his use. The high ideals are often ruined by an excess of material things, but how could these ideals express themselves to others except by material things? Possibly Jesus never uttered a more meaningful thing than when, after warning against anxiety about food and raiment, he added, "But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." It would seem that he must mean that all that may be necessary in order to the expression of that kingdom in our lives would be given, the kingdom being the essential thing. Whatever, then, does not fit into this great structure or plan is useless, and may be injurious.

It may be that a gratification of some desire, perfectly harmless in one, would greatly injure another, and that things hurtful at one time would prove innocent at another. We all marvel at the ceaseless labors

of Livingstone, who tells us English drawing-rooms were more wearisome than tramps through African jungles, and stand with shoes off before the tent at Chitambo's village, when we find him dead on his knees, closing his life, still praying and longing for the welfare of the people he loved so well. Such self-denial and toil were essential to the task God had assigned him. But our place in his kingdom does not put on us such requirements. Indeed this place may best be filled by some of us, if we shall eat with publicans and sinners, like our Master, provided the feasting be done for the same purpose as filled his great heart. During the world war we denied ourselves food we may well enjoy now, although it ought to be evident to us all that the needs of God's kingdom in these days of great responsibility and great opportunity, make luxury in any form more than criminal.

Our bodies, essential as they are, are often in our way. Nothing could be more important than to master them, bring them under very early in life and keep them there. What splendid servants they may be is seen in the skill of the surgeon's hands, the fingers of the pianist, the voice of the singer. In such cases we almost forget that the body is acting at all. It may be used as an expression of the incarnation of God in us, as yet more fully was true of the body of Jesus Christ. Think of his touch, his voice. But just as often do we feel the inability of the body, even at its best, to say what we would say or do what we would do. And if it is out of order, how utterly helpless and hopeless we are. There are diseases which seriously interfere with

our religious life, diseases which tend to make us morbid and even pessimistic, diseases which produce abnormal religious conditions, which demand the attention of the neuro-psychiatrist, and whose symptoms have misled the student of religious phenomena. Undoubtedly we may at times need a skilled physician, when we think we need a spiritual adviser. For every reason we should take every care of our bodies, just as we do of our minds, but especially for religious ends, not forgetting that they are wondrous works of the great artist, God. We are being told that it is well-nigh a sin to have certain diseases once considered mere misfortunes, and surely from this higher point of view the sin is more apparent. When Elijah became thoroughly despondent in regard to his own future and the future of the people among whom he labored, and saw no reason why his life should be prolonged, God first made him eat and take a rest, because he had been without food and had been under a terrific nervous strain.

It is scarcely needful to call attention to the interference of bodily appetites and passions with religion and worship, sometimes the result of our own sinfulness, sometimes in large part an inheritance from the past. Horrible indeed are the accounts given us by some of the ancient monks of the wicked dreams which came into their souls, at the very moment they were expecting to be in rapt fellowship with God. We do not have to be vicious to find such interruptions to our religious life. Often, without any full consciousness of the causes which disturb us, these disturbances are

there. "The sound mind in the sound body," is an old legend; with equal truth we might speak of the holy soul in the holy body. We must heed the injunction of the apostle to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, and it is most blessed to know that the cleansing of Christ's blood extends to the body as well as to the soul. Let us call to mind how the psalmist says, "My flesh," yes, my flesh, "crieth out to the living God." There are holy faces as well as holy lives. The aurora about their brows is not thrown upon them from without; it comes from within both the soul and the body.

There are interferences of a very different kind. Many devout souls cannot sing. What a loss this is! A distinguished bishop afflicted in this way often said that his happiest anticipation of heaven was in the confidence that there he would be able to join in the great chorus. Many do not know one note from another. Perhaps in such cases, just as deaf persons have quick vision and blind people have quick hearing and delicate touch, there are large compensations in the development of the inner spiritual life, and in less dependence on the body. It would seem, however, almost an obligation to train one's ears and voice to hear with gladness and to sing with spirit the songs of Zion.

The place given to gold in the world, and to some extent in the life of the church stands in the way of the religious life. The temptation which attends the lure of money is not confined to the rich. Indeed quite often the man who has had wealth all his days is less

subject to the baneful influence of money than the poor man. He has gotten used to it. He has enough of it to make it needless for him to try to get more. Among this class of people we frequently discover some of the choicest souls. The lust of the flesh, as it shows itself in longing or seeking for money, is not there. But the poorer man, who sees what money can do, who has come into some close connection with the glory and helpfulness of it, but who may see no chance for him to be rich, may have a desire for it that may blind him to the spiritual possessions. Where no longing for it exists, money may rob the poor man as it robs the rich by the place he gives it. Things may be worth while, churches may be great, ministers may be distinguished, men may be attractive, as they stand the money test. In such companionship, we may have our largest comfort and happiness. Multitudes of sins are covered up from our gaze by gilded coverings. Wealth has rights, just because it is wealth, and in the dispute between the rich and the poor, we are prone to take the side of wealth without consideration of the real facts in the case. Every one who has stood at the grave of Burns at Dumfries, has been moved by the simple monument, which represents the poet standing at the plow with a patch on his knee, a daisy at his feet which the plowshare has just turned up. He thinks at once of how Burns sang

"We dare to be poor for a' that,"

but immediately how in the town near by and in Ayr, if he would see the haunts of the distinguished Scotch-

man, he must visit the public houses or saloons where he so often drank himself to drunkenness. The beauty of his poverty is spoiled. Why do we not always see that wealth is so often stained? Yes, it is manhood, Christlikeness, which counts, and for this we must long.

Paul found it wise to write to Timothy, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." The love may take possession of the Christian worker, when he has no prospect whatever of getting more than enough to keep the wolf from the door. In many quarters, the church has adjusted its whole existence to the demands of wealth, until the workingmen with some degree of justice have accused the church of being a rich man's organization, and have refused to have anything to do with it, just because they did not feel at home in a church so dominated. They are at home only where the adjustment is to the poor man's life and problems. The teachings of Jesus concerning wealth occupying as they do so large a part of the gospel message, especially as recorded by Luke, are not to the front where he placed them, and are interpreted in such manner that their evident severity is softened down, so that they may be listened to by the guilty ones without any pangs of conscience or determination to mend their ways.

The religious man may, with a certain type of piety, have loose ideas of monetary obligations. Woefully common is this with ministers and religious workers of all sorts. They may pay their bills, but with no proper degree of promptness. They may fail to pay their bills at all. The obligations of the church itself

in monetary matters are frequently not thought of as being like those of the merchant or banker. These are but phases of the devotion to money, the worship of the golden calf. There can be no abiding spirituality, no continued communion with God, no truly uplifting and strengthening worship, except as we build upon the eternal laws of righteousness and honesty. Lust has assumed its worst form, when its desires seek their satisfaction by the violation of the moral law in any respect.

The lust for gold is nearly always a lust of the flesh. The inordinate desire for it is a desire for what it can do for the outward man. It is possible, in the righteous making of it and the righteous using of it, to be making character. But when the mere glitter attracts, we may not care what else there may be of evil or good: if only the evil is not too evident or too bad, we may not care whether there may be anything else there at all. It is the gold that counts, and Jehovah cannot be where the golden calf, even if not worshiped, is.

We live in an atmosphere surcharged with an ambition for political power as over against the pursuit of lofty idealism. Ever since the days of Jesus and before, the prophets have been called upon to build the kingdom of God in the midst of a people with wholly materialistic conceptions of kingdoms. The church has suffered in its own moral standards, and the members of the church have suffered each as well. How saddening are the words of Jesus, words we might well think of him as saying to-day, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." We

must needs keep in mind that the church and the world cannot be kept absolutely apart, so far as they both enter into our lives. The citizen of the state is a member of the church, and if he is controlled by wrong motives as a citizen, he cannot have the highest type of religious life and experience. All the low standards that have prevailed in any national life have reacted on the church. No more striking illustration can be found than that furnished by the German church, and especially its pulpit, during the great war, when hate and cruelty and barbarities were defended with all the earnestness and eloquence which belong to the defense of the cross and the condemnation of sin.

We do not need to go as far as Germany. We have illustrations enough in our own land. We had for a while very holy dreams, ideals such as no people ever had before. We thought of ourselves as the world's servant for Jesus' sake. But the things more practical came into sight; we saw an opportunity, as we supposed, to regain our comfort and yet more, and then we crucified the idealism and the great man who at one time was recognized as our leader in making it victorious. Under the inspiration of the same holy impulses, our people decided definitely upon the destruction of the liquor traffic, and now that it is all over, the people begin to ask whether after all it may not have been done too hastily, and if it may not be best to be very lenient towards the violations of the laws enforcing the constitutional amendment. The lust of the flesh has come back and has taken its place of prominence. Meanwhile hosts of Christian people have

agreed with the new position, and have joined in the cry of the multitude before every one of the new national ideals, "Away with it! Crucify it! Crucify it!"

No one can be an idealist in the church or in the religious life who is not an idealist in business, politics, or anything else. If the lust of the flesh is followed anywhere, it is followed everywhere. There is not much use to dream great dreams on the Sabbath, if on the morrow we are to ridicule them as impossible of fulfillment, as indeed in every way undesirable. For that matter we shall stop our dreaming after a while, because we shall lose the power of doing so. One reason our missionary appeal during our Centenary was so effective was the similar ideal still prevailing in the nation. The waning of this national idealism is having its ill effect on more recent plans. We must come to God, so far as we are concerned, with no such ignominious surrender of principles which lie at the foundation of the kingdom of God.

Akin to this and of like influence on our religious life is the national trust in material greatness. We make much of navies and armies, and yet more of the great industries and vast storehouses of wealth, and the church is expected to join in the wild huzzas which accompany each new achievement. But we may well sing with Kipling,

> "The tumult and the shouting dies;
> The captains and the kings depart;
> Still stands Thine ancient sacrifice,
> A humble and a contrite heart:
> Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
> Lest we forget, lest we forget!"

Our leading citizens are our millionaires, our best people are those in very comfortable financial conditions. When we were not nearly so well off as now, Matthew Arnold said of us, during a visit to America, "Your people are too beastly prosperous." Most Americans are not disturbed at the word "beastly," provided only there be large truth in the word "prosperous." The whining to-day over the financial situation is largely the result of the inability to gather in the money quite so rapidly now as a few months ago.

We are not to forget that nations are to be judged by the same standards by which individual character and worth are estimated. Nothing can be right or worthy in the nation which is wrong or unworthy in the individual. In national life, as in corporations, it is so common for groups of individuals to do what the individuals would not dare do, and to hold opinions which the individuals at least do not announce, should they hold them. Selfishness, greed, excessive luxury, indifference to suffering, may be national sins, and when found they are as hateful to God as the life of the rich man at whose gate Lazarus sat, or of the priest and Levite who glanced at the wounded man and passed by on the other side. And we are partakers of all these sins unless in our hearts we constantly rebel against them, and with our voice, our pen, and our vote, we contend against them. And all this we may do not only in our private life, but as we form part of the church of Jesus Christ. Unless the church does make its protest, it is not guiltless.

What concerns us most just now is the effect of all

this on our religious life. In that great vision Isaiah not only cried, "I am a man of unclean lips," but also, "I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Those who would readily admit the influence of national theories on an established national Church boast that independent churches are free from all such dangers. When we go into our churches, we go out of conditions out of harmony with the Word of God; and to some extent unconsciously perhaps, we have been during the week influenced by what we have seen and heard. We say the Christian should not give himself up to attendance upon worldly amusements, lest he injure his spirituality, but, being in the world, he is much of the time of necessity in touch with the very influences that make these amusements hurtful. Sometimes the bill-boards announcing the next play hold out before his gaze the worst things in the play, and he cannot help seeing the bill-boards. Here is the occasion for a godly intolerance, a godly narrow-mindedness. All the greater things are reached by some straight gate and narrow way.

Certain kinds of so-called religious experiences are chiefly of a fleshly nature, and as such retard in no small degree a sane and real religious development and interfere with genuinely spiritual worship and experience. We should be very slow to criticize anything claiming to have the Christian life for its end, if there is evidence of sincerity of purpose, especially in days when the laborers are few as over against the greatness of the harvest. We know what physical manifestations attended the Wesleyan revival and other similar

movements. But John Wesley did not seek, nor did he desire, such manifestations. On the contrary, he sought to prevent them, at least for quite a while. But what shall be said of those who seek to produce such conditions, and seem to think that without them there can be no evidence of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit? Sometimes unconsciously, sometimes of set purpose, they resort to well-known psychological laws to bring about a high nervous excitement with marked physical accompaniments; and what shall be said of those—very many of them truly good—who imagine they have lost the testimony of the Spirit, unless they are in possession of certain enjoyable, emotional excitements? Without bringing any railing accusation and without indulging in any sweeping criticism, I would call your attention to the frequency with which men of this type fall into great sin, not uncommonly in the very midst of their supposedly exalted experiences, and also to the dangerously erroneous theological presuppositions for which they contend. This is not the place for any careful study of such facts as have been presented, but it will be sadly interesting for you at some time of leisure to learn the philosophy or psychology of these facts.

It is not meant to deny a legitimate, yes, and a desirable connection between the body and the religious experience. We have the story of Moses, presenting himself with shining face after he had been in fellowship with God on the mount; and neither painter, poet, nor preacher will ever grow weary of the picture of Jesus transfigured until his very garments were aglow

with the divine nature within. It is a joy to think of saints whose faces announced their saintliness, whose hands were tender with the Christlikeness of their souls, whose steps going on behind the footsteps of Jesus seemed to move with a divine eagerness and speed. At the same time, let us not forget that Paul speaks of the fading glory on the face of Moses, as if this were not the all-important thing, and calls attention to the more permanent things in the religious life; and that Jesus evidently did not desire his disciples to magnify unduly the shining of his person, and constantly called their attention to the shadow of the cross and the pain of true self-denial. If these outward appearances show themselves incidentally in connection with any deeply-rooted Christian experience, well and good. Certainly we shall not then be afraid of them or too much resist them. But so soon as we begin to seek them, we are in great danger of losing what after all is the lasting, uninterrupted fellowship with God and the deeper joy that goes with it. Strange to say, the results which follow are apt to be very much like those which attend excessive ritualism.

Certain types of premillennialism are certainly not helpful to the deeper religious experience. The question as to the truth in the general premillennial position is not raised, for many devout souls who are evidently in constant touch with God have aligned themselves with this school of thought. It may be that in the case of these the spirituality is not because of their premillennialism. Jesus made the coming of the Spirit, the other Paraclete, dependent on his going

away. His bodily presence interfered with the larger spiritual life. His insistence that Mary Magdalene should not touch him, when she sprang impulsively towards him as if to clasp his feet, was in keeping with this same idea. She must not put so much value on the mere recovery of his body whose absence from the tomb she has so lamented. Paul urged with great emphasis that although he had known Christ after the flesh, thinking largely of his historical career, he would now know him no more in this way. No one can unduly long for the merely material or physical evidences of the presence of God, without to that extent sacrificing his faith in the spiritual, which is the essential life and person of the Godhead. No one can trust in that which is visible, without losing the power to see and know the invisible. Wonderful are the words of Paul: "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

It is possible for us, while looking forward to the victory of the gospel at a coming day by the personal reign of Jesus, to lose the consciousness of his presence in the world to-day working out his great program. We may seek to save ourselves from some of the misfortunes incident to these beliefs by thinking of an early return of Christ. But in fact, in spite of all the promises of the theorists, he does not come—and the days go by. There is no vision of him except

in the history of days long past, or in certain prophecies with detailed interpretation. For the most part the world is as empty of God as for a Buddhist or a Mohammedan. He is expected to come back some day. Certainly he is not here in a world rapidly, and for the present hopelessly, "going to the bad." These things are mentioned not in any way controversially, but to point out that where views like these go to this extreme, we have no right to expect heartfelt worship, nor the blessedness of a vital communion with God. There is no God near enough to be real. Certainly he is not everywhere; and if he is not everywhere, we may at last find that for our real needs he is nowhere. Whatever we may think with regard to the consummation of all things, or how it is to be worked out, we must have a God ever working, even when we do not see him, and learn to have faith in his spiritual power apart altogether from all that is material.

"He hides Himself so wondrously
As though there were no God;
He is least seen when all the powers
Of ill are most abroad.

But right is right, since God is God;
And right the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

The lust of the flesh shows itself in its most unfortunate form in the various endeavors to use religion for ends more or less carnal and selfish. Men go to Church and worship and support religion for what they can get out of it largely of a material sort. Along with that questionable maxim, "Honesty is the best

policy," they have adopted another, "It pays in this life and the next to be religious." Some African tribes have learned just enough about Christianity for them to add the cross to their other fetiches, and to treat it as such. The professing Christian may be as guilty as the savage with a little more of refinement in his practices and beliefs.

In many ways the lust of the flesh presents itself, and in every case it stands in the way of the spiritual life and hides the face of God. So materialistic is this age that multitudes find the worship of God unattractive. You will note this further fact, that the finest musical programs, and the most splendid art, and the most eloquent lectures on high themes are as unattractive and for the very same reason. All these things are dull because life is so largely built on the lust of the flesh. And the cure will come, not by way of asceticism, not by the surrender of one or another pleasure, for other things will come to take their places, but by living in our higher, real selves opened wide to God.

The second hindrance to the spiritual life is the lust of the eye. We are reminded here of the second temptation of Jesus. "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down.' . . . Jesus said unto him, 'It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.'" The temptation is to show off, to love the merely spectacular, the visible as over against the invisible. Not even a miracle is of value if performed

for its own sake. When Herod desired Jesus to show him what wonderful things he could do, he refused to do so. The lust of the eye, the eye lusting, the eye cut loose from control and going its own way—this it is which hinders.

The eye is a great organ. Marvelous are the beauty and the knowledge which steal in through these windows, walk in through these doors, into the secret places of the soul. The educator has learned of recent years that not through the ear only, but through eye and ear is truth to be conveyed. The greater any blessing, the greater is the danger. Very well did our Master say, "If thy right eye offend thee (cause thee to stumble), pluck it out and cast it from thee." The eye needs back of it a great, clean, strong, wise soul, to control and to use it. If the eye runs away with us, if it is used for pernicious ends, incalculable is the damage it can work in the man himself or in those whom he meets. It seems so self-sufficient. What need for more than itself, and the wonders that it works? Here are things to be seen, and it is an unusual opportunity. Why not embrace it? Only a fool would refuse. If the scene is spectacular, no matter whether it be a gorgeous sunset, a snow-capped mountain, a beautiful cathedral, an elaborate, startling motion picture, a great city fire—this is enough, ask no questions, go.

It is well that we take advantage of the eye in education, in religion, in entertainment. But as we do so, too frequently the ear and even the mind or reason walks out. On the motion picture screen we have only

a few lines, often put together in a bungling way, out of harmony with facts and even poorly spelled, and then the picture. But what matter if the picture so often wholly transient or even hurtful, attracts us? The eye's lust has been gratified, but the soul has not been helped. Special pleas are made for the eye, just because it so largely releases the mind from thinking and the soul from seeking God. The truth passes in so easily, and the soul finds itself at once satisfied in some beautiful religious spectacle, and moral obligations are so easily accepted through some great pageant.

The eye indeed loves to be deceived, to have some skilled man play tricks on it. The magician, the sleight-of-hand performer, always gets a crowd, and when all is over, what is left? The eye has wandered through meandering paths of inexplicable mysteries, but its lust has for a while been appeased. How far the eye may go in its demands is seen in many extravagant forms of art, impressionist, futurist, cubist, going to every sort of merely spectacular extreme, until sometimes, as one looks at such creations the question will arise whether one's self or the so-called artist is insane. In that second temptation Satan knew, Jesus knew, that by that one startling scene properly staged, without one word of teaching, more than by all his parables, his sermon on the mount, his beautiful life, he might secure a host of followers. But there would have been no lesson of his kingdom there, and the crowds would have been following wonders, and not himself, with empty souls.

From this point of view, even when not in any sense immoral, the popular forms of entertainment make more difficult the heavenly vision. We read in Paul's first letter to the Corinthian Church, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." But here the thing uppermost in life is that which lays all its stress on that which the eye beholds, and makes it the one means of obtaining what brings the largest pleasure. One who has spent his life in looking intently through microscopes would hardly be expected to be among the first to see, on the distant horizon, the approach of a vessel at sea. It is not easy under more normal conditions than those which prevail to-day to disabuse the minds of the multitude of the idea that the vision of the eyes is more valuable, more reliable, than the vision of faith. In a most sublime passage, Paul sums up a great statement of truth, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, but the greatest of these is charity." He can mean only this, that faith, hope, love are eternally permanent. And yet we are told in sermon and hymn that faith shall be "lost in sight," and that hope shall "die in glad fruition." These pleasures of ours only confirm us in the notion that the visible is the only reality.

Where stress is laid on that which is pleasing or exciting to the eye, and it seems not only right but almost necessary that we should give a large place to diversions based on this conviction, we shall find nearly always at last that a multitude of sins may be covered

by a splendid exhibition. Yes, we must see the wonderful spectacle, even if old-time religion and old-time morals meet with scant emphasis, and sometimes with a measure of ridicule, as now out of date. Indeed occasionally the scenes exhibited entertain the more, because for the time being the mind and heart are shocked, while the eye is in a sense gratified. We might in all these cases find an application of those very severe words of the Master, used on a very different occasion and for a very different purpose, "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward." And how subtle is the entrance of the evil! And how shrewd is the concealment of defects and of downright sin! The invisible things accompanying the spectacular do enter into life at last and work their mischief. Ruskin tells us of a visit to St. Mark's cathedral in Venice. While there he was moved to examine the statue of one of the doges. The work was finely executed on the front, where it could be seen. But the sculptor had left the back uncut and had shoved it into a place where the unfinished part could not be seen. Ruskin tells us that the sculptor, who had been well paid for his work, had afterwards run away from Venice a defaulter. Yes, this is a frequent picture of the much prized, visible things of this transient world. Hidden in all its much admired glory may be imperfections, moral wrongs, sins, and these souls of ours, dissatisfied with all except the infinite and eternal, find themselves deceived.

The modern display of wealth and dress and luxurious homes are real menaces to the higher spirituality.

Here is a substitute for manhood, for the divine image in the soul. It reminds one of the days, when at school our companions or ourselves with pencil dressed up the pictures of the great statues of Greece in modern garb and spoiled their glory. We did it for fun. But to-day the tinsel is in all seriousness substituted for the gold of a true humanity. Many there are no better than the lay figures on which the garments are hung. At a meeting of rotarians and their wives in a certain city some weeks ago, the proprietor of a department store, for the entertainment of the gathering, had a group of young girls to dress up in the latest garments of his great store and exhibit the clothes (not after all themselves, for they were of little worth just then). But when not done of set purpose, such is the great show, the great parade of the world. And this is unceasingly before our eyes, until we forget that divine nature within, which has in it something of the lasting beauty of the Lord and may behold in all its eternal splendor God's glory and power.

And there is a strange unreality about it all. The cheek that is rosy and beautiful may have been painted so deftly that it deceives the most observant. The display of wealth may be a mere veneer for mortgages and unpaid bills and sundry other debts. The social gathering is most frequently a scene of real discomfort, concealed under forced smiles and the skillful acting out of assertions of enjoyment. The devotion to the laws of fashion in one part of our living is almost sure to show itself in all the parts. For unreality, unnaturalness, God has no message out of the clouds, nor

the flowers, nor the song of birds, nor the human race. Nor can God speak with any direct message. It reminds one of the young woman, who sat down at her piano to practice and found that the younger children had muffled all the wires, so that in response to her touch not a sound was heard.

Underneath this display of wealth, the grossest things may be covered up. Immorality may be there. We are accustomed to speak of slums, where the poor and degraded have their homes and their haunts. But these are not the only slums. They may be seen, where social pomp and beauty reign. Dishonesty may be there. Every dazzling light, every glittering gem, every artistic gown may be stolen. The skillful ear might catch, interwoven with all the laughter, the sighs and groans of poorly paid or unpaid sewing women or toilers in the mill and factory.

Most of us are mere lookers on at all this pomp and show. Very true, but we are lookers on. We live in this atmosphere. We are a part of a social life which makes all this ideal. We see multitudes of imitators, while other multitudes are trying to "break into" this whirl. Hard it is to be in this world and not of this world, to be righteously intolerant of that which so largely hushes the voice of God for the world, for there is very little of God in what we call society, society which is supposed to set the pace for all the rest of us. The greater is the problem, in view of the fact that all this show of wealth, and what goes with wealth, crowds itself into the church. Some things in the world we may get rid of, but in this we are

helpless. But let us not forget that there were Christians in the household of Cæsar, and "even in Sardis," were those who had not defiled their garments, and that under most untoward conditions they were building the kingdom of God.

You see this same love for the spectacular in the life of the people. When we show the visitor the city's life and greatness, we point out the sky-scrapers, the large department stores, the most striking residences, the largest and most costly churches. The moral forces, the charities are named only in so far as they may find their headquarters in huge piles of brick and stone. We recite the huge figures which tell the resources of the banks. We show the thoroughfares filled all day long with lines of automobiles. We plan for a greater city with a doubled population by 1930. We place at railroad stations huge signs with the words, "See us grow." In the small towns as well as the larger ones we have our brilliantly lighted white ways. Many desire a great navy and a huge army not so much for purposes of defense as for display. We must be first in everything. Sometimes, in the eagerness to make a startling display, the people drive madly to moral destruction over temperance and virtue. It is insisted that the money cannot be spared that comes through vice and the destruction of the higher welfare of the people. Here is a madness like the madness of the owners of the steamer *Titanic,* which went to the bottom a few years ago, because its owners were determined, without regard for icebergs or passing steamships, to break the record of ocean greyhounds.

Very common is that patriotism which is little more than a lust of the eye, eye longing for gratification in the state with the same longing which we see in the ways of pleasure and amusement. It is forgotten that a nation's greatness consists of those same qualities which make an individual great. Loyalty seems to demand adherence to such ideals, when once they are formed, and so with few exceptions citizens of all classes seek for their country this outward glory, which shall dazzle the eyes of the rest of the world, and make men everywhere wonder. It is astounding how good men dream for their native land dreams they would not dare dream for themselves.

Let us once more remind ourselves that there is no possible separation between our religious and our civic life. When we go into the presence of God, we go with all the ideals we have formed elsewhere. It is not true that religion and politics have nothing to do with each other. True godliness, true worship will show their influence in one's politics, and political theories will help or injure the religious life. How can one expect communion with God, where the lust of the eye prevails anywhere in his life? Yes, if it prevails in that apparently remote field of civic life, God cannot speak to us so as to make us hear. The foundations of a nation are the invisible, eternal things, and here must be our trust.

In God's temple it is quite possible to imagine that the eye lusting for its own gratification is the soul yearning for spiritual things and for God, and to think that these longings of the soul are met when the lust-

ing eye has been gratified. Estheticism may easily take the place of religion. Every visitor to Europe is moved with wonder, as he lingers for hours in the great cathedrals gazing at their architecture, their decorations, their pictures, and their imposing worship, and listening to the inspiring music. He is pained to discover that the people have drifted from faith and worship, that corruption has taken hold upon the ecclesiastics who go through the magnificent round of ritual, and upon the people who live under the very shadow of the splendid structures. After all these years, what evidences of any permanent good is to be seen? Indeed, in many places, it would appear as though the one hope for the spiritual welfare of the people is in the humble Protestant chapel with its most simple forms of worship. The Protestant Churches everywhere need to be on their guard, for there is ever a great tendency to please the eye rather than change the heart of the worshiper, and as piety declines, the demand for the gratification of taste becomes more urgent. In all three of the Synoptic Gospels, with an undertone both of reproof and sadness, it is recorded that "as some spoke of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said, 'As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down.'" God was to depart from the temple in spite of its splendor, as he had given up the kingdom notwithstanding it had been planned and founded by himself.

The spectacle of a great throng produces emotions

which may be estimated of real religious value when they are not, and the throng may have been gathered, as sometimes at evangelistic services, by various devices largely out of an ambition to have a multitude for its own sake. How often it happens that what has been considered true religious fervor fades away as the crowd dissolves! On any occasion it is inspiring to see a great host united for one purpose and by one idea, and most of all when worship is the aim. But this is secondary and must not be put first. Jesus may have had among other things this in mind when he said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Poor substitutions are made. The glory of an earthly temple takes hold upon our eyes, until faith loses its vision of the glorious New Jerusalem above. The hundreds gathered in the church blind our eyes and deafen our ears to the sights and sounds of that "great multitude which no man can number who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The choir in robes standing or sitting in response to fixed rules, and the organist with skilled hands mastering the organ and directing the singers, keep us from gazing at a sublime spectacle, the great innumerable host triumphant singing or harping on their harps. We imitate and poorly imitate with sights, very largely, if not quite, material, the heavenly visions granted to devout souls in spiritual things. Our worship gets to be so largely acting. We are reminded of the trifling things by which behind the curtain in the play they imitate thunder and lightning.

The distressing thing about it is that while we do our acting, while we imitate, we may and often do lose touch with the glorious realities of heaven, the glory of the other world begun below for true saints. Luke tells us that at the ascension of Jesus the disciples gazed steadfastly toward heaven, when two angels said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen him go into heaven." They were gazing at a startling, to them, new spectacle. They were missing the real glory of their risen Lord, who was the same Jesus as had healed the sick, raised the dead, comforted the sorrowing and died for human sin.

But shall we shut out from our churches and their worship all that is beautiful, all that is impressive to the eye? Shall we follow the Quaker with his painful simplicity and the absence of all form? Or shall we do as the Hindu, who glorifies ugliness by making his deities as repulsive as possible, in order to separate them as far as possible from all resemblance to the human? A celebrated preacher has a lecture with the striking title, "Is fun devilish or divine?" May we not ask the same question in regard to beauty? And the answer is the same in either case. God is a God of beauty. He is a God of splendor, of glory. To make us know all this, how the Old Testament writers struggle to find words! If this be true, it must be that those who have had a vision of him will seek to describe the vision, so far as visible things are used, with the most beautiful and most glorious scenes. The great cathedrals and the great paintings and windows

are what might have been expected. Yes, they will continually be coming, because men have seen the Lord. But there are those who have not seen the Lord, the lust of whose eyes, still craving the beautiful, takes these beautiful things men inspired of God have made, and leave out God. It must be as if one greedy of gold and pearls and precious stones should make his way up through the gates of heaven, that he might have all these, and, as he walked the streets of that great city, should find no Christ, no God there. And it is not inconceivable, if somewhat fanciful, that men in their eagerness to see the glories of that other life might go on for a long while without beholding the face of our Lord, the supreme object of interest to redeemed men.

The pride of life corresponds with the third temptation of Jesus. "Again the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, 'All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.'" There is a great temptation to follow any path that leads to success. The demand is for efficiency. The man who "puts it over" is the man who is called for. Undesirable things may be later weeded out. We may attend to that later. There is a strange distrust of ideals, which are pushed into the background, while they seem not to pay, to be brought out at some time in the future when there seems to be a call for them. There is a strange fear of ideals, a fear of the very God who controls the world and must bring to completion at last his great plan—a fear that he may be against us and so we

must avoid him and his great purposes. "If I trust him, my glory, my scheme must be defeated. Yes, his plan is too big for me."

It is a mad, wild, crazy life which thus develops. It is like a great dash of color, a charivari, a child beating the piano, hammering as many keys at once as he is able, making all the noise he can. Two boys were sitting together one day with a great pile, hundreds, of marbles in front of them belonging to one of them. The other suggested that the marbles be divided equally between them, and that they play "whoever gets the mostest will be the bestest getter." This is a very correct picture of most of the inhabitants of the world—they do not often get any further along than this. Men seek a fortune. Why? Just to get a fortune. Men seek honor. Why? Just to get honor. They seek office. Why? Just to get office. The preacher wants the big city church. Why? Just to get the big city church. Those piles of material on that great lot are not a church, not a palace, not a hospital. Haul yet more of the same sort and keep hauling and let it extend to the heavens, still you have not the thing worth while. Indeed you may have too much material—more than half of it in the way. The palace, the hospital, the church, either or all of these, are in the mind of a great thinker, a dreamer, called an architect, and they are there as an intangible thought. But he is very foolish who may be unwilling to adopt that thought and make the material obey, for fear he may lose some of it. Greatness is as much in what we lose, as in what we gain. The kingdom of God came to

Jesus, because he gave up all the kingdoms of this world which the devil laid at his feet.

Too often the church itself adores mere success, and seeks it on the same basis as the world. What does it wish? The crowd, the applause of the world, a large membership, a popular preacher, to get ahead of its rival. Yes, you may find the pride of life in a church as truly as in the world. And here again each member finds his pride as large, and of the same kind, as that of the church as an organized body. Paul met with the tendency in his day: "as many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ." It was circumcision then, but to-day it is something else. In either case the desire is for the glory that is to come. With Paul the way to the achievement of the highest aims was through the loss of all things for the sake of the nobler aim. Of Jesus it was said with a sneer, but what a tribute, "He saved others: himself he cannot save!" No church can be true to the Master in any other way.

If we are to find God, if indeed we are to worship him, then whether in the church or in the world from day to day the pride of life, the adoration of success must go. How can we ever know God or the ideals which center in him if we are afraid of him or them, afraid of the results of absolute surrender, entire obedience at any risk? It is in loving communion, closest, intimate fellowship that we gain any confidences. Timidity never wins in any great enterprise. How widely true the common saying, "Faint heart

never won fair lady." There is a profound psychology in the discovery by Paul of Jesus at the hour when the cross no longer terrified him. Nor shall we discover him unless our plans, our ideals, agree fully with his. Otherwise we shall not speak a common language, and there will be no common ground on which to meet. It is hard to believe that God can feel himself at home in some churches and in some hearts. In his last hours, in the presence of those who had been so long with him, Jesus said he was alone, except for the Father. Alas for those churches in which even though he may be present, he must say again, "I am alone, alone."

Life's pride nearly always fixes itself on the things that are non-essential in character and in religion, and indeed in all life. Hear a personal friend: "I am getting old. With me life will soon be over. I have made good. Look at this beautiful home. Think of my social standing. My children are set up in life by my effort, and they, too, are all succeeding. But I am not happy, and I wish there had been more in my life than all this." Shall we not learn that, as in every part of life, failure very largely grows out of wrong emphasis, so is it in life as a whole. Life may pride itself in an achievement, which while it may show energy and skill, is of little, perhaps no, worth. The great king of Babylon with great pride said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty." But a voice came from heaven, "The kingdom is departed from thee." The things

he trusted are never permanent. We are constantly reminded of Kipling's hymn:

> "Far-called our navies melt away,
> On dune and headland sinks the fire;
> Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
> Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!
> Judge of the nations, spare us yet
> Lest we forget, lest we forget!"

The admirable traits of character are to most men such things as add popularity. All character ought to be not only good, but beautiful, but beauty is not an essential. When once it is emphasized, the nobler qualities fade. The men most spoken of among the so-called best people are not of necessity of the highest type. It is not surprising that great popular leaders so often fall into great sins. It would be possible to give names of not a few who, leading in some great moral reform for the glory of prominence and of ultimate success, have committed crime in those very things they professed to despise and sought to overcome. Here is one who, in the earlier days of the prohibition fight, with an almost insane desire for popularity, brought himself before the eyes of the church people of his great state by his most brilliant appeals, and was found drunk on the streets in the midst of the campaign. Here is another who gave his spare moments and more from a busy pastorate to a movement to protect the morals of the boys of the city, found guilty of the grossest form of sexual vice. We think of God as the infinite, the omniscient, the omnipotent, the absolute, when himself emphasized his

holiness and love. We interpret him thus in terms of the pride of life, and our anthropomorphisms are at the same time our estimates of human greatness. How strangely slow we are to learn that the cross is supreme, whether in God or a redeemed humanity, or the universe at large.

Great ecclesiastical gatherings are illustrative of the same truth. What does a great General Conference esteem the chief thing? As soon as the bishops are elected, along with those who are to fill the other higher offices of the church, the members become quite restless and hear calls to important duties at home. Very seldom are such meetings conducive to deep spirituality in those who are present or in the church at large. In so many ways the pride of life gets into the place of control. This is evident at times in the recital of past victories, although the claim may be made that all has been done to the greater glory of God. Ecclesiastical pride is the most offensive and the most hurtful of all pride, because with such rich treasure at hand, the church magnifies what adds to its outward show. And it is apparent why God is not found, for we have a partial manhood seeking a partial God in a partial universe. The whole man in a world seen whole must enter into the presence of a whole God. Then is it that spirit meets with Spirit.

There is no place for the pride of life in the Christian life, and so the world tendency being that way is against us. The Bible insists everywhere on humility as essential. That marvelous picture of Jesus in Philippians, to which attention cannot too often be

called, presents him as bringing himself down to the shame of the cross, and at no time calling attention to the glory of his equality with God. God himself does not seek to dazzle men with his glory. He refused to let Moses look upon all his light and power and consented only that he should see his "hinder parts." The best revelation of him is to be found in the cross. Of course we are not to think of God as not being all that God can be, nor of Jesus Christ as ceasing to be divine in his great life of mercy. But we must not think of God as great for the sake of greatness, as shining resplendent for the sake of the resplendence. No; he is the servant of his children and all he has and is ministers to this end. And the world must know his greatness by a personal knowledge of his saving grace and not by the outshining of his glory. In the cross, with all its darkness and apparent feebleness, we see and feel the power of God unto salvation, yes all the power in the Triune God.

The humbling of ourselves by no means involves the surrender of any elements of real human greatness, nor the speaking of ourselves as fit only to live in the dust, and forever unworthy to look up into our Father's face. Indeed the right sort of humiliation is the first step to knowledge, the first step to true character, and to a vital Christian experience. It eschews all the merely outward pomp of an exalted humanity and seizes upon all that is essential or worth while. It gives up forever an imaginary, yet for the moment glittering, self for the real eternal self made in the image of God and redeemed by the blood of Christ. Of

course, the deficiencies, the weaknesses, the sins are revealed. They are not found in God, in Jesus. The vision of the perfect life is clearly seen, and towards this the soul struggles. Here are the things which make us truly human. With this self God has to do.

Here then is a most inspiring thought—the humbled man and God humbling himself meet, and understand each other, and hold sweet communion. It is the meeting of the real God and the real man, and they are related as Father and child, and speak the same language. A great failure is that life which, magnifying knowledge for its own sake, and personality for the sake of the glory of its independence, and religious experience as a thing to be proud of in itself, seeks God in the flash of the lightning, the thunder of his power, the miracles of his hands. There can be no communion with him, no knowledge of him. Those who bear the cross, and meet God at the cross, his cross, hear God's voice and feel his power in their lives. Did not Paul think of this when he uttered his strong desire to know "the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." The great shame is that eternal beings with eyes for the infinite vision, made to live in eternity for the Infinite and Eternal, should forsake that which is the infinite in themselves for the fleeting glory, and seek the things that speedily pass away, the ever fading light upon the face of God, that God who often makes his glory fade that he may if possible remain to us. That we ever seek the pomp and glory is indeed a Satanic temptation. They come to us from worship of him. They are all he gives and

they quickly pass away. He that doeth the will of God abideth and God abideth with him and in him

"We would see Jesus, the great rock foundation
Whereon our feet were set with sovereign grace
Nor life, nor death, with all their agitation,
Can thence remove us, if we see His face."

Lecture IV

THE APPOINTED HOURS AND THE APPOINTED PLACES

Lecture IV

THE APPOINTED HOURS AND THE APPOINTED PLACES

SHOULD there be stated or appointed hours for worship? Is there any need for them if worship is the normal life of the soul? Why not make all life worship? Why not, when moved to do so, turn aside to commune with the God who is always consciously near? That this is the natural life, when we let ourselves alone, when the best in us is not spoiled, we have seen many proofs. Beautiful are those words of the poet Wordsworth:

> "My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky.
> So was it when my life began;
> So is it, now I am a man;
> So be it when my life grows old,
> Or let me die."

What is true of the rainbow and of all the other more beautiful things of God's creation is true also of the God of the beautiful things. The psalmist rejoices in beholding the beauty of the Lord. Standing at Inspiration Point in Yellowstone Park, a number of persons unknown one to another were looking down through the beautiful canyon to the falls some distance down the river in silence and awe, when all at once a

young woman started the doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," and the whole company joined with her in the well-known hymn of praise. We are seeing every day in nature, in history, in the current events, as real evidences of God's presence. Why should they not move our hearts to adoration?

It is interesting that hymns and other poetry are so common in the ethnic religions. We should not be surprised at this when we call to mind that the devotees of these faiths were seekers after God. The most striking illustration is found in the literature of the most ancient Indian religion, made up entirely of a large group of hymns called the *Vedas,* "the books of wisdom," as the word means. This wisdom is nothing other than the outpouring of the heart in praise to some deity, a nature force among many others, but for the time being the only object of adoration and praise, in which fact we have already a marked approach to monotheism. Many passages in these hymns might be used in Christian worship, if we might substitute the name of Jehovah for the name of the heathen deity. They were after a while aids to a purely formal worship, and became the center for a very elaborate ritualism and an abstruse metaphysics, but with rapture the men who thousands of years ago wrote these songs, and they who first sang them, must have seen the face of God—a God whom they knew only in part—in sun and stars and fire and storm. The best of our own Old Testament is the Psalms, as the best of our more recent sacred literature is the hymns. Often as we go about our tasks, or walk the streets, or

wake from our sleep in the still watches of the night, for some reason we can seldom quite explain, some one of these ancient or more modern words of praise will enter our minds and even take hold of our lips. Perhaps our hearts go out in that praise which is so normal, and unconsciously we find ourselves using the best words to express the mood we may then be in.

Equally impressive is it that sometimes when all faith in creed or orthodox dogmas has been given up, there remains a pleasure or a joy in some of the acts of worship. A very dear friend who had withdrawn from the church some time before, because he claimed to be an agnostic, lost his only child, a beautiful little girl, under very sad circumstances. While he was standing with his face to the wall in the room where the little corpse was lying, I put my arm around him and heard him amid his sobs and groans, say with deep earnestness again and again, "O God! O God!" I said, "And you do believe there is a God?" "At such a time as this," he said, "you have to believe it, and you have to cry out to him." Matthew Arnold, while in America, was entertained in the home of a devout Episcopalian, who every morning before breakfast read appropriate prayers from the prayer-book in family worship. The head of the house, knowing Mr. Arnold's belief, or rather unbelief, did not have the servant call him until after the prayers, but the distinguished guest, knowing what had happened, remonstrated, saying that he read these same prayers every morning in his own family worship. Most of us have read *Adam Bede*, and have found a peculiar attractiveness in the way

in which George Eliot, daughter of a Wesleyan lay preacher, describes the beautiful life, the reverence, the communion with God of the consecrated Christian hero of this remarkable story. We can almost imagine the heart of the distinguished author finding itself for the moment strangely warmed. A distinguished scientist of the last century, whose studies had robbed him of his faith in the unseen, tells us that, in the hour of darkness which fell upon him, he still found pleasure and uplift as he would sit in the church listening to the great organ and the anthems of the choir.

We marvel that a great scientist, accustomed to the study of all kinds of mysteries and to the investigation and interpretation of closely related facts, and a novelist, with an almost supernatural insight into human nature, should not have understood themselves better, should not have seen how their hearts were constantly struggling upward in spite of the efforts of their reasons to hold them back. It is not at all improbable that in not a few cases like these, if the church had not insisted that the faith and the worship should express themselves through certain ancient forms of worship and formularies of doctrine, but had permitted a large liberty, the heart might have had its way and ultimately might have brought the whole life into peace with God. Our greatest hope in dealing with heathenism is that we may be able to encourage the wings of the soul to fly upwards, and to give, through the gospel of Jesus Christ, such a large and more correct vision of the God whom they ignorantly worship that there shall be something truly worthy of the flight. After-

wards, if they so desire, and quite probably they will, they may formulate in terms more or less fixed, at least for the time, the experiences which they have enjoyed. But what we must most of all desire for them is the largest possible liberty to express the yearnings of what are the very secrets of the soul.

For ourselves nothing can be more important than the preservation intact of the naturalness of the spiritual nature and of its behavior. Here above all we may be ourselves, and ought to be ourselves. What we must rely on, wherever we worship and whenever we worship, is the desire of our hearts after God and the determination and effort to give expression to that desire. We must make less of outward or merely mechanical stimuli, or of forms made to order for those who would fain do something religious, merely because this is the becoming thing. There was a large amount of truth in the old Quaker position, that we must wait for the moving of the Spirit before uttering the word of exhortation or leading the people in prayer. Their chief blunder was that they did not duly appreciate the possibility of having the Spirit always present in the assembly of the saints and in each saint's heart.

Like all the fundamental, essential, natural things, worship will be, when sincere and real, quite simple, without elaborate preparation and without elaborate means of giving expression to itself. When words are used in prayer, they should be the simplest form of speech. The Lord's Prayer is a beautiful illustration of this. Nearly all the words in the translation of it in our Authorized Version are Anglo-Saxon. The Greek

is equally plain. No prayer should be otherwise. A pastor of my boyhood used now and then to thank God for the hypostatic union and for the great theanthropic work of redemption. Prayer will never be grandiloquent, not, even in the popular sense, eloquent. How fundamental in human life are motherhood and childhood! If we speak of them in daily conversation or in poetry or song, no words are proper but such as the most ignorant easily understand. You would find here too that in our English language the words most commonly used belong to that same Anglo-Saxon simplicity. Sometimes, without full realization of why he does it, the writer or the speaker, unaccustomed to such modes of expression before, writes or speaks as a little child. The lullaby is the easiest verse, with plainest words, and music which every one can sing, and yet no song so stirs our very being as this. It touches those things within us without which life could not remain whole, could hardly be said to be. Of like nature is prayer, of like nature is all worship. There are beautiful anthems good for a concert which scarcely fit into an hour of worship.

> "Prayer is the simplest form of speech
> That infant lips can try;
> Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
> Thy majesty on high."

Yes, and they are the "sublimest," largely because they are the simplest.

And we do not need to be afraid of making worship one of the commonplaces of life, and seek to place it off in great occasions and great places. It need not be

monotonous in any unfortunate sense. The phrases of greeting and friendship do sometimes lose their original meaning, but at that very time they are essential to our earthly relations and are in every way beautiful.

> "It is a little thing
> To speak a phrase of common comfort,
> Which, by its daily use, has almost lost its sense.
> Yet on the ear of him who thought to die unmourned
> 'Twill fall like choicest music."

These words have become the best coinage of our common brotherhood. We could not live without them. They give expression to human character at its noblest. "Farewell," we say, and "Good-by," or "God be with you," "Adieu," "With God," "I leave you," "Au revoir," "until I see you again," which I am confidently expecting. All these are commonplaces, just because they are essential and fundamental. If ever worship and above all prayer becomes a part of life's daily routine, it is for the same reason. We may be sure of the value of the prayers we say each morning and evening as we kneel by our beds, just because they prove we have discovered the real meaning of our lives, as they relate themselves to God, and the valuelessness and unhappiness of those lives except in communion with God. More than beautiful are the stories told of men in the highest walks of life, who have continued through life to repeat the child prayer, "Now I lay me down to sleep," and who have done so, partly because they never did reach the day when they felt they could do without it. There is a most wearisome and burdensome monotony in a cry like the "never-

more" of Poe's *Raven,* but there is a sweetness, never lessened by sense of weariness, in the continuous assurance, "I love you," "I love you."

We need no intermediary, no priest, in our worship, for the very reason that it is so natural to us that we can do it ourselves. Full of meaning is it that no religion in its early, simple stage had a priesthood. The later days of the religion of India were overburdened with priestliness against which Gautama rebelled, but in those days when they sang from their hearts the Vedic hymns, each man was his own priest. The same was true of the religion of Israel. The patriarchs offered their own sacrifices. The priest, like the king, was permitted by God in patience with the frailties of his people. Christianity had no place for a priesthood in its beginning. The New Testament has no place for a priesthood now. But a priesthood came, and is the dominant factor in the largest part of the church to-day. In all these religions, the priesthood came when the childhood naturalness and simplicity were lost. Every reform which came to any one of them was aimed chiefly at the priesthood. Protestantism in its purer form not only does not recognize a priesthood; it does not make any wide distinction between the minister and the layman. It teaches most emphatically the priesthood of all believers. And there is not the same kind of sanctity about the church building or the Sabbath or other holy days as was thought to linger about temples and the sacred days of other religions. How beautiful is that conception of a "City without a church," as Henry Drummond puts it, which

John presents to us. "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." The true priest is the man—very often what the church calls a layman—with a pure heart, with clean hands, with a personal knowledge of God. Such a priest, though it may be with faltering, limping words, may bring the real sacrifice. During a revival I once called on a man to pray, holy but quite rude in speech, who on this occasion used language more barbarous than ever. At the close of the prayer, I saw in the audience a very cultured man whom I had long been urging to surrender to Christ. It seemed a great blunder that the brother who prayed should have done so poorly just then. At the close of the services, the cultured man gave his heart to God, and said the thing that moved him most was the prayer which had seemed to me so regrettable. He had been moved by the simplicity and the genuineness of this unlettered man, and began to be ashamed of himself that with his larger knowledge he was still not a Christian.

There is a priestly element of great value, when the ministrations of God's house, by whomsoever conducted, have in them the interpretation of the desires and the aspirations of our souls, for so often we do not understand ourselves, especially the best in ourselves. A minister of the Methodist Church tells of a very plain woman of his congregation who came forward at the close of the services to say to him, "I enjoyed your sermon and the music very much to-day. But much more I enjoyed your prayer, because you said to God the things which all the week I have been trying to

say, but just did not know how." Of course we know that all during that week God had been understanding the prayer she was trying to say; yes, we know that "the Spirit was helping her infirmities," and making "intercession with groaning which cannot be uttered." But it was an unspeakable comfort to her, we can well understand, to find words for the deep longings of her soul. This good woman was not alone in this experience, for most of us have felt the benediction of the word in season which has made it easier for us to pray and to worship, because it has made us see clearly our real spiritual needs. Even then, however, the priestly aid does not go so far as to worship and pray for us; it but makes it easier for us to pray for ourselves and to worship, because our normal selves have been released. We may worship God without the aid of priest or preacher and without going to Gerizim or to Jerusalem. In his first epistle John tells us, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. . . . But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you."

While worship is the normal life of man, it must be always borne in mind that there is need of cultivating and training the religious tendencies by constant use and by fellowship with others who are religious. We say that "a poet is born, not made." But the poet needs a large education in the art of poetry as in other things. Jenny Lind and Caruso were discoveries in the humbler walks of life, and from the first the world marveled at their God-given voices, but they had training and

constant practice. Of course, in all these cases training and practice would accomplish little, unless there should be present some native ability. The poet, the artist, the musician must be there to begin with. May we take it for granted that the religious man is there to begin with? Unless we may, we shall have, with all our training, what we see in art in the miserable travesties on painting on the walls of amateur art schools, where there is obedience more or less perfect to rules, but no art whatever. We shall have men going through the forms of worship with the outward show of reverence, imitating the deep piety of genuinely religious souls. There may be a few abnormal people in the religious realm, as we have them in other departments of life. But we must take for granted for ourselves and for all others that all are religious. One very important thing to be kept in mind is the fact that we cannot be all religious in the same way. How different in many ways, religiously, were the Roman Catholic Cardinal Newman, the Church of England Liddon, the Baptist Charles H. Spurgeon, the Methodist Hugh Price Hughes, the evangelist Sam P. Jones, but they agreed in one thing, their consciousness of God's presence and the testimony of the Spirit to their divine sonship.

The training in the religious life should begin and be carried forward at those periods of life and in those ways suggested by the devout students of religious education. Much must be made of certain times in the young life when it is most impressionable by religious things. Throughout all this training there are well-known laws which govern. Let us not be disturbed at

the thought of tying together the idea of law and a supernatural experience. God is subject to law, and where law does not seem to be present, it is the result of our own ignorance. The laws are divine and ought to be utilized by us always for the accomplishment of the divine ends. It is a most suggestive fact that nearly all of that not very large number who come into the church and a genuine religious experience in their later years have been trained in Christian homes in their childhood, and went regularly to Sunday school and quite frequently to the Church services as well. The oft quoted Roman Catholic saying is wisely put, "Give us the child during his first few years and you may have him the rest of the time." It is more than probable that in nearly all the cases where men appear to be utterly non-religious, it is because the religious training was neglected at the critical period of their lives. But we must not despair for ourselves or for others—even in the most unpromising cases. We know how in other departments of life men who have had no early advantages, under the right kind of training, in hands peculiarly skillful, often almost miraculously develop latent powers which might justly have been considered not only dormant, but dead, and become in not a few instances famous in some chosen activity. So is it with the religious life. Those who have been in the ministry for a number of years can recall such miracles of grace.

This cultivation of the religious life must go on throughout life. We have no more right to expect religious strength without exercise than to look for

strong healthy bodies without the proper use of the muscles. Unwise every way is the tendency with many good people to fix their eyes on past joyful experiences to the disregard both of the present and of the future possibilities. Painful beyond words are the experiences of those who, once living as in the presence of God, are now joyless, and wander about as orphans under the very shadow of the Father's house. If they might find it possible to sing at all, they might find no more appropriate words than these which Cowper has given us:

"Where is the blessedness I knew,
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill."

And this may come to pass as completely by over-emphasis at some other place in our natures. The student at school or out of school diligent in investigation, the very busy business man, even if perfectly honest in all his business dealings, the lover of pleasure, though the pleasure may be in every way innocent, may find themselves suddenly some day having within no response to the voice of God. The ideal life is that which has all departments continuously developed each in harmony with all the rest. Shakespeare has well expressed in his Hamlet the possibility and danger of the neglect which grows out of over-emphasis:

"Thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

So far as religion is concerned, the whole life must equally be open to God.

Where the religious life is neglected, except on few occasions, these tremendous forces of the soul may break loose and show themselves in numerous fanaticisms. The wild cries and mad contortions of the Mohammedan dervish, as Allah takes possession, are the direct result of the conception of God which places him far away from his creatures, an Oriental potentate. Fanatical holiness sects, Christian Science, Spiritualism might not have disturbed the peace of Zion, if God and the other world had always been very near, if the souls of professing Christians had always been kept in perfect tune with the Infinite. It is a well known fact that in all the history of the world, among all well-developed peoples, the periods of doubt have almost invariably been periods of superstition. It would be well to learn that the best way to prevent the spread of all such errors is not through controversy or bitter opposition, but by supplying those things lacking, which the error has, because of a measure of commingled truth, partially provided.

We meet quite frequently with the idea that we may restore to ourselves some former exalted experience by resorting to methods once used, but now very largely laid aside,—singing without instruments or choir, mourners' bench, old-time class-meetings, and such like, none of them in any sense to be criticized in themselves. Usually the results are quite disappointing. Do we not remember how the brazen serpent, to gaze on which was to secure healing from the bite of the ser-

pent in the wilderness, not only lost its power in later days, but became an idol interfering with the very life of the people, and having received the contemptuous name of *Nehushtan,* "a piece of brass," was finally destroyed? It is indeed true that

> "The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfills Himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

After all it is not the fault of the custom that it corrupts. It is because the world blunders in the use of the custom and in its expectations from its use. Some means of grace are needful. What they shall be is not a matter of great importance, except that they shall fit the man who uses them, and shall not be substituted for the grace itself. They must be the means by which the soul exercises itself towards godliness and develops itself so that it may never lose the vision of God, and may each day have a larger vision than the day before.

There can be no greater need than the creation of reality in all our religious life. The religious life must be as vitally, as naturally, a part of ourselves as eating and sleeping and the conduct of business. The demand for genuineness runs through all the fundamental things of life. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, among many injunctions of intensely practical value urges, "Let love be without dissimulation," that is "hypocrisy" or "acting." John in his first epistle exhorts, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." It is a sadly familiar truth that love and friendship,

and marital and parental and filial relations are often merely formal things, conducted it may be by approved regulations, but like the acting of parts on the stage by skilled actors. Here we have truly grave problems. Friendship, for example, may be beautifully present in its outward glory on an ocean journey, at a picnic, in the club-room, or at an afternoon tea, but absent in some business transaction or in some great financial straits. Marriage may be for monetary considerations, for purposes of convenience, or still worse for the relief or satisfaction of passion, while on the surface every demand of God's Word and of civic law seems to be met. We know full well with what severity the Master condemned the Pharisees of his day for their hypocrisy or acting, for mere formality, without genuineness and without any evidence of the effect of their professed faith on their daily conduct. The teaching of Jesus was not merely a condemnation of this unreality; it was also an effort to lead men into the assurance of the reality of those things about which the Pharisees so glibly talked, and for which they made such elaborate rules. Himself was condemned largely because he lived a life of reality, and spoke of the things of the kingdom as verities. We cannot associate with him long without feeling that God is a personality, in his works, yet apart from his works, that he is indeed all that is meant by the word Father. We are walking with him and hearing his voice. But when Jesus speaks of any of these things in the hearing of the great religious leaders of his day, so unreal, so

almost uncanny is it all to them, that they accuse him of blasphemy and at times say he has a devil.

We must be ourselves in our Father's presence, not dressed in robes made for the occasion. The great advantages of the publican over the Pharisee was here. He came as a publican, which he was, and made no other claim. We must not be afraid to be found there thus. We are to come with our peculiar doctrinal views, thinking it may be with some of the ancient heretics, because we can think no other way about it, not claiming an orthodoxy we do not have. We shall never know how much hurt has come to many good souls, because the order of the church has seemed to require of them that they should adopt certain statements of faith. We are to come with our own Christian experience, however unlike it may be to those recitals we may have heard from the lips of certain enthusiastic saints, or on the other hand, however unreasonable it may be to those who must reach every conviction by way of some kind of laboratory. We must come with our own preferred mode of worship, if this be possible, but without any claim that it is the only way. The Nonconformists of England did and said many very foolish things, but we owe them a debt of gratitude for the claim they made for the rights of the individual conscience, and their refusal to submit to the command of the Church to observe its forms and ceremonies. So they brought back to the church which rejected them, as Methodism also did, the reality of God, and Jesus Christ, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The millionaire and the king are neither

of them to be envied. Most of us at times have pitied them. Loaded down with duties and social requirements, and more or less elaborate ceremonial demanded by their position, they seldom enjoy life, and find the dearest of associations interfered with by the requirements growing out of what may have been considered at first their great good fortune.

The ideal Christian life will pass without awkwardness from the toil of daily life and life's pleasures to worship, and from worship back again to the pleasure and the toil. In a little New England town opposite a home in which I was receiving delightful entertainment, I noticed in the early morning the wife of the town banker with her servant busy at the week's wash, and she was doing it well. That evening she entertained a number of guests at dinner. She prepared and served a most delightful meal, at which she presided with perfect grace, after which, seated at the piano, she rendered the most beautiful music. Through it all she was the same woman, going from one task to another with perfect ease and with perfect pleasure. In a European art gallery there is a well-known painting which represents a company of angels just arrived in the kitchen of a monastery, helping the monks in the preparation of the supper. The point in the picture is that the angels seem perfectly at home, as much so as the monks themselves. Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, writes, as you well remember, in eloquent words of his departure so soon to be accomplished, and of the crown of righteousness which awaits him, and then, after a few other words of information and

request, asks for such commonplace things as the cloak which he left at Troas, and the books and parchments. He evidently felt no inappropriateness in the bringing of these things together and that, too, in an inspired writing.

Our greatest temptation is to think of all life in the terms of the material, the things of time and sense, because these engage most of our attention, and then the religion becomes an unpractical addendum, beautiful, but beautiful as the evanescent rainbow or the fast fading flower. A distinguished lecturer on his way to the hall sat just behind two ladies on the street car, one of whom was on her way to market to replenish the larder; the other was expecting to hear the lecture, and told her companion the subject, "Keats in the Kitchen." The immediate reply was, "What are Keats?" The object of the lecture was to show the place of culture in the most menial work of life. Now the lady who asked the question knew as well as her friend, as well perhaps as the lecturer, who Keats was. But life just then was only marketing, and that overshadowed every other idea and ideal. The wondrous beauty of the poetry of Keats was transformed into some kind of appliance to make cooking easy, or to wash and dry dishes without labor. The spiritual life of the church may be forgotten in the big business which centers there, and the very mention of its name may at once call to mind the numerous collections, the annual budget, the employment of a soprano, or the purchase of a new organ. And there is an inevitable tendency, just because our chief worship is within

walls cut off from the world, to think of all religious life as of an entirely different sort from other experience, and thus to cast an unnaturalness about that which is the most natural of all our acts.

Our religious life is in greater need of nothing than the proper realization that all is sacred and all is secular. Very few of us ever entirely rid our minds of the idea that the world is of necessity under the control of some evil power, or at least not under the government of God. The saints have therefore quite often felt it to be necessary, in order to be holy and to commune with God, to withdraw as far as possible from the world. The history of the monkish life has demonstrated the folly of such a program, for worldliness has climbed stone walls, and opened barred doors, and enslaved the occupants of establishments, built under the shadow of a cross, and filled daily with chants and incense. Those who cannot afford to withdraw from secular toil have engaged in it as a temporary necessity, much to be regretted, and have imagined that in some measure it is inevitable that their conduct should be shaped by principles a little less than ideal. Some go so far as to say, "When in Rome we must do as the Romans do," which not infrequently means, "While in Satan's world we must do as Satan directs." A widely spread theology would have us believe that the world, as it is to-day, is necessarily and unalterably bad, and can be made good only by some cataclysmic change to come at a time more or less near at hand. Many of the noblest preachers spend their Sabbaths in denounc-

ing everything except religious acts and sacred places. They are ever warning their people:

> "We should suspect some danger nigh
> Where we possess delight."

A distinguished clergyman of the English Church has said that in some churches, after he has heard the sermon, he has felt it would have been quite appropriate to have substituted for the opening sentence of the *Te Deum Laudamus,* "We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord," the words, "We praise thee, O Satan." Such pulpits seem to proclaim the almightiness of the Prince of the power of the air.

Who made the world? Who set in operation the forces which are used in manufacture and in the various forms of locomotion? Whence originated the economic and industrial laws which govern in all commercial relations? Who gave the soil and the seed for our crops? There is but one answer, and that answer assures us of the sanctity of all life, of the presence of God in all our affairs. We should take up every piece of work with reverence, as if handling the sacred vessels of the Lord, and every noise of trade and factory should be a hymn of praise to God. If ever a different voice is heard or a different purpose felt, it is not due to anything in the world itself, but to men who think they may do what they please with it for their own selfish ends. The retributions which nature visits on the man who uses her forces in the wrong way are the strongest proofs of how divine they are. Mr. Babson tells us there is no need for business depression

or financial panics, and that whenever they do come, it is because of dishonesty, extravagance, and luxurious living during a period of prosperity immediately preceding. Indeed it is here in the activities of life that the moral and religious truths have their best expression. In the church we have theory, ideals, models for living. In the shop and factory and office we give a body in which these ideals are to live, and through which they may give a tangible expression to themselves. It is remarkable in what eloquent manner the truth is proclaimed by the businesses of the world. A gentleman, coming to a city on Saturday and expecting to remain over Sunday to hear a friend preach, said to this pastor, when he found he had to return unexpectedly, "I am sorry I shall not hear you to-morrow, but this morning I visited Mr. H. in his place of business, and this was as good as going to church. I never look up at his great place of business, that I do not feel that I am in the presence of God." We often speak of the sanctity of the shadow of the church spire, and the blessing it brings to the tempted and tried man along the street. It ought to be equally true of the factory chimney and the department store.

That all is secular is evident—not secular in any low sense of that word. What we call supernatural is under law, law which we do not understand or even see, but must know when we have a clearer vision. What we call miracles may be combinations and uses of laws of which as yet we are entirely ignorant; indeed quite probably they are. It is God's world, and he knows how to combine and use in ways altogether

his own the most common things. In our religious life, in worship, and in Christian service, we employ things wholly material. Our churches are built of the same brick and stone, according to the same mechanical and architectural laws as the residence or the store. The electric power which lights the church or pumps the organ bellows, or opens the pipes to the air which gives the sound, is the very current which lights the city streets, or moves the machinery of the factory. The preacher uses the same laws of rhetoric and logic and employs the same words as the member of congress, debating a proposed measure, or the lawyer pleading the cause of a man accused at the bar of justice. The Bible can speak of heaven only in material terms. We read of gates of pearl and streets of gold and walls and harps and thrones. The church needs money and is conducted on its business side exactly like other business. Religious experiences are guided and controlled by the same psychological laws by which all other mental operations are conducted. When Jesus would open the eyes of the man born blind, he anointed his eyes with clay made of spittle, and sent him to the pool of Siloam to wash. This man was not guilty of Naaman's great mistake, when told to dip in Jordan seven times in order to be cleansed of his leprosy, thinking that the healing would come by means wholly supernatural.

There is an apparent danger in this way of thinking. We may drag down things spiritual to the low level upon which we have placed in nearly every case the secular life. The preacher becomes a common lecturer.

The choir sings for entertainment. All sorts of catchpenny schemes are resorted to for the purpose of raising money. The costly church is erected because the rival denomination has one. Worship and other church obligations are discharged like the duties of daily life, to be attended to indeed, but to be gotten over with a sigh of relief. What we must do is to lift up all that is secular to that place which in our thinking we have given to things supernatural and divine. The incarnation of the Son of God, begun in a supernatural or virgin birth, received in part its consummation in the carpenter shop at Nazareth; and on a cross redemption was completed.

When the secular and the sacred are thought of as distinct and far apart, there is always a wrench more or less painful in going from one to the other. It is not at all surprising that a child in the primary department of a Sunday school, after hearing the stock description of heaven, should have cried out in pain, "I do not want to go to heaven," or that another child upon being shown the angels in Raphael's Sistine Madonna should have asked with deep solicitude, "When I get to heaven, won't I have any feets." Nor is it strange that after a busy week, we so often fail to get any pleasure or comfort out of the Sabbath, or that after a very glad season of worship on the Lord's Day, we feel an unaccountable sense of discomfort on the next day in the office or store, in the very recollection of the uplifting experience. We must learn better. We must think of work and worship as the stepping from one divine task and experience to another.

Whether on the Sabbath or the week day, we must in the evening be able to sing the same song:

> "One more day's work for Jesus,
> One less of life for me!
> But heaven is nearer,
> And Christ is dearer
> Than yesterday to me.
> His love and light
> Fill all my soul tonight."

We worship so poorly on the Sabbath, because we worship so poorly during the week. It is done too seldom and too much apart from life's realities. We are like the young man picked up suddenly from his plowing in the field, dressed in evening dress, and led into the midst of a gay and fashionable party. He does not know what to do with himself. He has more feet and hands than he can well manage. We can but ask ourselves, what would such do if called to enter the company of heaven. Surely they would not feel altogether at home. We must keep at our worship until we feel perfectly comfortable with God, and feel we should not be startled if heaven were to open as for the men of Bible times. Here can be seen the importance of those many opportunities and forms of worship on all the secular days—the prayer-meeting in the middle of the week, the family devotions morning and evening, and the hours spent in private prayer and meditation. One of the most saddening things of our modern life, with all its haste and worry, is the neglect of one or all of these things, or the performance of them in the most perfunctory and an almost meaningless way. There is a tendency in these moments of

simple worship to miss the excitement and inspiration of choir and organ and great throng, and to think that God is not quite so near. They are dull moments to be gotten over hurriedly, as mere obligations to be met, like the payment of taxes or the weekly dues in the beneficial society. This is as absurd as to imagine that the sweet fellowship of husband and wife, or parents and children at meal time cannot be perfect, except on the occasion of some more extravagant spread as at Christmas or Thanksgiving Day. On the contrary, it may be, whether at the more elaborate meal or the more elaborate worship, we shall be like Martha cumbered with much serving, while the experience of Mary may be reserved for the sweeter simplicity.

Who can estimate the value of the downtown church, kept there in spite of the fact that the residences have been changed to another part of the city? Its very presence leads many a busy man, many a shopping woman to breathe a prayer. Most impressive in this regard is old Trinity Church, looking down Wall Street, the center of the world's monetary life. Still better is it that such a Church, as is true of Trinity, should be kept open all the time, inviting into itself the passer-by to rest and pray. The chimes, playing the tunes of the church at stated hours, call all who hear to pause and think of God. Very popular is that simple picture of the Angelus by Millet, in which the peasants bow their heads in the midst of the field where they are toiling when they hear the church bell ring in the village near by. The Mohammedan sets us a

never-to-be-forgotten example in the custom of prayer five times a day, no matter where he may be, in response to the voice of the muezzin calling from the minaret of the mosque. It is a good thing to keep near us some book of devotion, not only in our homes, but in the places of daily toil, the Episcopal prayer-book, the hymn book of our own Church, the *Imitation of Christ* on which so many saints have fed, and others that might be named. A few lines read in the midst of our daily concerns will feed our souls, will make us think of God, and bring him very near. Rich in blessing will be the services of the Church on Sunday to that one who has filled the busy hours of the week with communion with God.

It is better if, in addition to this constant intermingling of our daily duties with prayer and church bell, and religious meditation, there shall be a striving upward to God on the wings of every deed, as we seek through all our work to reach the throne of Jehovah or to tell the world the meaning of the Christ life. In some department stores the day begins with prayer and the reading of the Scriptures. But what of the wage of the girls? And what of the honest service of the girls? How much of God is there? How much adoration of God? In some shops services are held at the noon hour. To what extent are these shops giving expression to the principles of the gospel? How much are they striving until Christ be formed in them? How is it possible to find God on one day of the week if all the rest of the week we have been denying him, or violating his law, or finding no place

for his real presence in our toil, however much we may speak his name, or keep up the semblance of adoration? Life must not, cannot be divided. It must be all Christlike, all divine. It may be a hymn of many parts and every range of voice may be in the chorus which sings it, but it must be one song and the voices must not be discordant. When Dvořák, the Hungarian composer, visited America some years ago, he was greatly pleased with our Southern plantation melodies and charmed his friends, on his return, with his enthusiastic rendition of them. Later on, breaking these airs into fragments and collecting them around a theme of his own making, he created the beautiful and popular *Symphony of the New World.* Even so must we with the cross, Christ's cross, God's cross, for our theme, gather about it all the commonplaces of our lives, until all shall be the *Symphony of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

And what is true of the business life must also be true of our study, our research. We find here avenues to God. If doubts have dogged our steps all the week, we shall have doubts while all around us are fervor and faith in the temple of Jehovah. Unless we have adored God in the laboratory during the week, or seen him moving through the pages of history, there will be a small probability of our discovery of him as we gather with the great congregation. Unless we find him everywhere, we shall in no rich, full sense find him anywhere. It is indeed a wondrous worship which a devout scholar presents. With a vision of God throughout the vast stretches of the universe, a vision

of knowledge, and faith where knowledge has been first, he comes to that higher knowledge where faith is supreme, and with a larger vision looks out upon that same universe. He can indeed say now, "I am thinking God's thoughts after him."

> "We have but faith: we cannot know,
> For knowledge is of things we see;
> And yet we trust it comes from Thee,
> A beam in darkness: let it grow.
>
> Let knowledge grow from more to more,
> But more of reverence in us dwell:
> That mind and soul according well
> May make one music as before,
> But vaster."

The ideal religious life is discovered to us in Paul's injunction, "Pray without ceasing." We must be always ready—ready for worship—ready for the hands of God. This will mean the renewal of our inner natures. Not God himself can get music out of some lives. During an unusually wet summer, while the organist was away, the woodwork in the great organ of my church became so swollen that the substitute organist one Sunday morning after a vain endeavor to make music, gave it up. At the close of the services a fussy little woman pressed her way to the front and insisted that the playing was intolerable, and the regular organist must be brought home forthwith. I replied, "Yes, it will be a pleasure, as it always is, to have our beloved organist with us, but to-day even he could not have made music on that organ." It is so common for us to blame the discords from our souls on God's providences, or on our unfortunate environment,

or the trials and sorrows of life, when the fault is in us. We need souls renewed by God and daily renewed. Great cathedrals keep some one employed to be in their organs every day, so that the organist will have nothing to do but bring the music out. So many in our congregations are frequently wandering away and needing to be restored. In very many revivals the number of reclamations exceeds the number of conversions. These souls of ours are very delicate instruments, and need constant watching by some expert, and God alone knows what is in man, and can keep man right. Our Master said, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Nothing is to be gained in merely going before the altar, the right life must go there.

God alone can get the music out of our souls when they are renewed. So many seem never to have an opportunity to show what is in them, just because the only hands that strike the keys are business associates, men and women of the world, unfaithful clerks, or exacting employers, servants, or mistresses. The story is told that on a Sabbath evening an organist was playing the postlude as the people were filing rapidly out of the church, when a stranger stepped into the organ loft and asked permission to try the organ. As he played, the people remaining in the pews fell back into their seats, and those at the door and in the aisles returned to their accustomed places. He played until

past midnight and no one left. At last, he turned to the church organist and said, "What shall I do to get them to go?" The organist replied, "Let me play and they will leave." And so it was. And so with us, God, and the world. We are in the world, but our citizenship is in heaven. We are in the world, but not of the world. If the world is divine, it is divine as it shines with heavenly light, as it receives its interpretation and its final shaping by heavenly laws. For the world is dependent on God who made it, to bring its music out, and it too needs reshaping and reorganization, before it is ready for him to use it. The miracles of Jesus have their lessons for us here. The world was defective when Jesus came, but it responded to his touch and then rejoiced in his presence. But at its best the world must not control our lives. We are greater than the world, and only God is greater than we. So many men resemble the hotel piano banged on by every passer-by, never revealing its sweetness and always out of tune. Now it is a part of a street air, and now a fragment of a hymn, now it is a snatch or two of some opera or oratorio, and now a bit of ragtime—and none of it played well, none of it complete.

When once the soul has known the transforming power of God and has his continued presence, every act and word are but expressions of the life within, a life which is now indeed the life of a child of God. Praise may be uttered just as truly with the plow or hammer as with the organ and the hymns, and prayer may be presented in the continuous effort to give expression to the character of Christ in all the conduct, an

expression which is self-expression, because the Christ life is implanted deep within. There will be times when we shall need for our worship things less material, things with but slight connection with this temporary material existence, and we shall find these best in the well-appointed church. In more exalted experiences the figures I have been using are hardly appropriate. The soul mounts up without material aids. It is like the lark which, though it builds its nest on the ground in the midst of dangers, soars on highest wing. To ordinary eyes there may appear to be two or three different kinds of life, but not so, they are all one, and he who has thus enjoyed them knows this is true. They are but changing expressions of the same life. One day the mother is busy mending the clothes of her little boy, and every stitch has her heart in it; another day she is dreaming dreams and making plans for his great future; yet again she holds him in her arms and, as she hugs him passionately, feels, as she says, as if she could break every bone in his body. It is all the same love of a tender motherhood. The patriot pays his income tax willingly to support his government, or denies himself luxuries or perhaps necessities in the time of war, or when the flag of his country is unfurled stands at attention, while the national anthem is sung, and then rends the air with his huzzas. It is all the same patriotism. So there is but one love for God, but one adoration of his greatness, but like his own revelation to us, it may go forth in many ways and in many portions.

When we have learned these truths and have put

them into practice, we go through life flinging out music in all directions. We are like great churches whose chimes and organ and hymns sound forth the notes of joy and inspiration to weary men and women who never enter, and we do not need to be constantly calling men to the better life. We are calling them by the very way we live, as church buildings are messages of truth and grace. But when we do speak or sing, there is a reality about it, because with all its supernaturalness it is free from unnaturalness, and seems to have its origin under the miraculous touch of the Holy Spirit, out of those experiences which are incident to all practical life.

Contact with men, through the practice of this larger worship awakens in them the same consciousness of the immanence of God and the same desire for the daily personal fellowship with him. It was said of Coleridge that, whenever he went into a company of friends, he so stirred their intellects that new creations of their genius might be confidently expected. The same was said also of Goethe. But more do those whose souls are in tune with God quicken others to the same constant praise and prayer, and unison with the divine mind and heart. It has often been said, that if on the busiest street one man will stop and look intently upward, the rushing throng will stop and look. So he who in the higher spiritual sense looks towards the heavenly things will bring many to join him in the rapturous gaze.

We must have our stated hours of worship. This is well not only in our church life, but also in our

private devotions. All religions have had appointed hours and seasons and places. Most noteworthy is the place of the Sabbath in the life both of the Jewish and of the Christian Church. The Word of God urges us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is, and all the teaching of the Bible is in thorough accord with this injunction. The custom of all really good men confirms the value of this rule. They have regularly appeared at the services of the church. All of them as far as possible have gathered their families together at fixed hours, and in the same way have attended to their private devotions. The lives of all such have proved the value of regularity in our religious life, as much so as in our physical life. Upon them the church leans in all its more essential work. Some there are who attend the church but little, except when the revival season is on, and they appear to be strangely warmed and do their share in bringing warmth to others. They are not useless, they seem to have their places, but the church would die if it depended on them. One of the great troubles in the church to-day is that not more than thirty to forty per cent of the membership of any local congregation attend the services of the church with a fair degree of regularity. The churches that are well-attended for purposes of sincere worship are usually the deeply spiritual churches, spiritual continuously with daily conversions, and not spiritual merely on certain great occasions, under almost abnormal circumstances and methods. What is true of churches is true of individual Christians as well. The periodically reclaimed are not

of the number of those who are always in their seats, whenever the doors are opened.

There are times when we feel but little like going to church, and this is true of other periods of worship; and we may have thought that it would be well if we might perform these duties at such times only as our hearts move us. We may have feared the formalism by forcing ourselves to such tasks. We may have seen a danger in doing the thing just for the sake of doing it, of keeping up a habit. This is unquestionably the wrong attitude. A study of the religious history of men will show that real backsliding comes in this way as commonly as in any other, if not more frequently. Watch the new convert. At first he never misses the services of his own church and, in addition, he enjoys similar occasions at the Young Men's Christian Association, the Salvation Army, and elsewhere. After a while, you miss him from the prayer-meeting, and then from the Sunday night services. Then he thinks it enough if he goes to Sunday school in the morning, and sees no reason why he should stay to church. Then he gives up the Sunday school and the Epworth League. Meanwhile, if you might know his private life, you would find the same neglect in his prayers and the reading of the Bible. Perhaps a yet greater intimacy would reveal a sad moral slump in his character. The enjoyment of our religion decreases in the more favorable moments, and more favorable moments grow fewer, by neglect of such hours as seem for the moment to have but slight promise of spiritual blessedness. Indeed there comes at last an awkward-

ness, an unnaturalness in our religion, and it becomes easier to give up things at one time essential to our happiness, though we may not altogether sever our connection with the people of God.

The facts are all against the idea that it would be better to worship only when we want to do so, or when some great sense of need comes over us. And analogy would seem to lead us to the same conclusion. The savage eats his food when he can get it. For days perhaps he is on the verge of starvation, because he has failed utterly in the chase. At last he is successful, and he eats to excess. This means early decline in health and strength, and shortness of days, and at the same time a minimum of enjoyment. The cultured man has his meals three times a day and, as far as possible, at the same hours. The mental food must be taken in somewhat the same way. It is a sure road to intellectual decline, to yield to the weariness of the flesh, when summoned to some high mental task which would mean the larger development of the brain. Nor dare we let long periods of intellectual idleness be permitted. We may lose the power to think worthily at all, and pass beyond the possibility of recovery. It is not the occasional exercise of the body, conducted it may be more or less energetically, but the carefully planned day by day training of all the muscles of the body, under the direction of some expert, that keeps the body in good trim for the varied activities of life. The very heavens about us, the world under our feet, keep up their life by rules somewhat similar. The seasons come and go with interesting and instructive

regularity. Winter may be severe and appear as if it were going to last forever, but the snows and the ice melt, the rivers flow, the warmer sun shines, and the buds swell and burst, and the flowers and fruits gladden all hearts. God brings forth everything in its time.

If there is any virtue, as we believe there is, in the gathering of God's people, in the communion of saints for purposes of worship, we may very well ask, how we are to have it with the uncertainty as to whether there will be few or many or any at the meeting for prayer and praise and fellowship. And while it is true that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, he is in the midst, for it is the Master's own promise, we all know how hard it is not to be discouraged, when we have had a right to expect many in the sacred gathering, and find only the two or three. What would become of the family worship, unless the family know that at certain hours all are expected to gather at the throne of divine grace. Is there not a peculiar joy in the consciousness, that at the stated hours of our personal communion with God, we are joining a great company at the one common mercy seat? Our religion is not individualistic; it is social or nothing, and the whole tendency to look upon our religious life with a sense of utter independence is in the anti-social and therefore anti-Christian spirit.

The Church is a divine institution. In a very true sense it is God's vicegerent on earth. Surely it has the right to appoint for those who belong to the fold the

seasons for prayer, and these seasons have added to them a new meaning, and may we not say a new power, by the very fact that they so gain their place in our religious life. We may very well think of them as appointments made for his people by God, and we ought to accept them as such. If they are appointed by him, we have a right to expect the appointed blessing. A minister, speaking of a trip he made around the world, said he found himself calculating the time so as to find the exact hour on Sunday and Wednesday when his people would be gathered for worship. Some of these hours would be in the night, but he would nearly always awake at the right time. And so he joined with his congregation in worshiping God. He says that these hours were the happiest in his life.

The congregation is called together not for worship only. The people are there being mobilized for service and for warfare. In this sense worship is preliminary to the real work of life. How can the representative of our Lord and King give direction to his forces and utilize the inspiration which comes out of the realization of the divine presence, if his soldiers and servants are not there?

As we look towards the appointed place and time, the expectation that we shall meet God counts for very much. He is in the stars and in the rocks and flowers. He is there where the mill grinds the flour or weaves the cotton. He is on the crowded streets. He is everywhere—not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father. But our minds are not expecting to see him or to hear him, and so we miss him. It is

like the preoccupied man, our dearest friend, it may be, who passes us on the street and does not see us. It was said of a very distinguished bishop of the Episcopal Church, that he did not know his own wife and children on the street, so busy was he with his high and holy thinking. We may find an application for the story so frequently told of the Englishman, who going to India to hunt tigers said on his return that he had not seen a single missionary during all his journeys through that most interesting land, and who was reminded that he had gone to India to find tigers and not to find missionaries. It may be as bad as that with man and God in this busy world. The man may be so busy and God so far away, although at the same time so near, that he may see not God, but only dust and dollars. And there are experiences so saddening, so wretched, that they lead those passing through them to say God cannot be here, the squalor and gaunt hunger of the slums, the darkness of some unusually crushing bereavement which does not lead one with Job to search for God on the right hand or on the left, but one takes for granted there is no use to do so. There may be not only the desire, but the determination to go even to his seat, and with throbbing heart and anxious tread, we go to the place where he is ever expected to be, and at the hour when faith is expected to bring him into view. We expect to find him and not often are we disappointed.

The daily lives of many very good people are so full of care and labor, so very busy, that religion is neglected and crowded out, and will be permanently

crowded out, unless there are urgent calls to worship at special hours appointed for that very purpose. Even as it is, pleasure and business are encroaching more and more on religion, and are in very many places seeking to rob us of our Sabbath. The busy Christian worker, pastor, deaconess, city missionary, going about what is beyond doubt the Master's business are in danger here. Unless they put into the plan of their lives hours for worship in private and for faithful attendance on the church, hours to be held inviolably sacred, they will find themselves doing the appointed work which will be no less mechanical or secular than any mere business, and will suddenly awake to see that they have lost God. Yes, this may be true of the pastor, to whom preaching and all the rest may be so entirely just his business or profession, that he does not feel the divine presence and does not take time to be alone with God at other hours. There is a pulpit eloquence of rare attractiveness with no manifestation of God's presence, and which brings no one, not even the preacher, nearer to God. There was no room for Jesus in the inn, not because there was any opposition to his mother having with her babe a comfortable place there, but because there was such a crowd that filled the place ahead of Mary. We may be willing to have Christ with us, but often he cannot find an entrance, because the place has already been preëmpted, and probably preëmpted by things not in themselves bad, bad just because they keep God out. We must make a place for him.

Places and hours become a part of our religion as

much as hymns and stained glass windows and organ. They are means of grace. It is most interesting to study the history of shrines and other holy spots. Legend and many forms of error have at times stolen in. But we may find here ladders on which to climb towards God. The Hebrew people never ceased to find a charm about Bethel and they thought of their Jehovah as the God of Bethel. The church of our childhood, where we sat with our parents, were converted, and received into the fold, retains its hold on us, humble as perhaps it is, and we never feel quite so near to God as when we worship there. Do we not pause now and then, and meditate at that very evening hour, when our mothers taught us about Jesus and gave us our lesson in prayer, until we feel our eyes growing moist with tears, and the air seems full of angels? These experiences find their counterpart in that renewal of patriotism which every loyal American makes as he stands at the tomb of Washington at Mt. Vernon, or in that hall in Philadelphia where our forefathers signed the Declaration of Independence. Or we are reminded of the charm which lingers about the places to which we look back after years of happy wedlock, where the troth was plighted which ended in marriage. All this grows out of our human nature and human nature at its best. Unfortunate indeed is the man who has no shrine at which instinctively he bows the knee.

We have what to-day we call our dates with friends. Why shall we not have our dates with God? Yes, why

not? He condescended to make covenants with his servants in the ancient days, and in those covenants bound himself by promises pledged by signs. In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we have a constant reminder of the covenant between Jesus as the representative of God, God's Son, and his followers. The bread and wine pledge him as well as those who partake of it. It is neither irreverent nor fanciful to think of his keeping his engagement at the hour appointed in the trysting-place. Why should we not say on Saturday evening, the preparation for the Sabbath, "Lord, I expect to be at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning at the First Methodist Church, and I ask that you meet me there, as thou hast promised to be with thy people always"? Try this some time, sincerely, reverently, and go expecting he will keep his engagement, because you have kept yours. The indefinite, general invitations of those who say, "Come around some time, just any time, and take a meal with us," do not find the response in many hearts like that which says, "A few friends will be with us Friday night at seven o'clock at tea, and I wish you in the number." How joyful to think of God's saying to us, "On Wednesday night I shall be at the prayer-meeting to talk with you. Meet me there." Gracious, wonderful was that outpouring of the Holy Ghost on the disciples on the day of Pentecost, which came through expectation and obedience to a request by Jesus for an engagement, "Tarry ye in Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power." They kept their engagement and God kept his.

"I know Thee Saviour, who thou art,
  Jesus, the feeble sinner's Friend!
Nor wilt thou with the night depart,
  But stay and love me to the end:
Thy mercies never shall remove;
Thy nature and thy name is Love."

Lecture V

THE JOYS OF WORSHIP

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THE JOYS OF WORSHIP

LET us now consider the joys of worship. The Scriptures evidently would have us think of joy as the normal experience always. They open with the assurance that "God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good." They record the triumphant strains of the writers of the Psalms, as they contemplate the glorious works of God, the enforcement of his laws for human happiness, his mighty, and living presence in the unfoldings of history. The coming of Jesus into the world sets all heaven and all earth to singing.

> "Down through the portals of the sky
> The impetuous torrent ran,
> And angels flew with eager joy
> To bear the news to man."

That evils are in the world is not for a moment denied; on the contrary it is emphatically asserted. But such a condition does not need to be, and is abnormal. We find no doctrine of dualism on the sacred page.

If we have the right to expect joy at all times, we should look for our highest rejoicing in that supreme hour when we commune with God. That joy is not looked upon generally as the necessary accompaniment of worship is quite evident. In a hymn, the peculiar

appropriateness of which seems to master a goodly number of pastors, Joseph Hart would have us sing:

> "Once more we come before our God;
> Once more His blessings ask:
> O may not duty seem a load,
> Nor worship prove a task."

We hear Nehemiah and Ezra saying to the people in their day, "Mourn not, nor weep. . . . Neither be ye sorry: for the joy of the Lord is your strength." And Paul the prisoner writes to the perplexed and persecuted Philippian Church, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, rejoice." There are many sources of joy, but the only joy which is real and permanent and which includes within itself all other happiness worth while, is the joy which comes from God and is rooted in God.

Happiness never comes by seeking it. The man of the world will tell you what a will-o'-the-wisp it is. He thinks each search for it may bring success, and so he keeps on trying. The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes tells us how his experience in seeking happiness for himself constantly brought him vanity and vexation, until he learned to "fear God and keep his commandments." It is just as true of worship that we shall not find the joy we desire, if we go to church or to our closets with this as our one aim. Most of us have attended services where from beginning to end, every possible effort was made by the leader to stir a very shallow emotionalism. The hymns selected were devoid of any real thought, possibly made up of a mere jingle of words set to tunes well suited to the

purpose for which they were used. The prayers were scrappy and little more than sound. The text was a mere string for the collection of incidents amusing, pleasing, pathetic. We are at times reminded of certain meaningless social functions, where each assures the other that she is having a delightful time, and where there is little else than the constant repetition of this and a cup of tea.

Happiness may be sought by turning the hour of worship into an entertainment where the weary mind may be diverted and refreshed. The building is made as pleasing and comfortable as possible. A choir of well-trained voices is secured and a delightful program of music is artistically rendered. Under their leadership, the hymns of the day are sung with life and zest. With well-trained elocutionary skill the preacher reads his lessons, and both prays and preaches with a rare eloquence. A prominent minister of our own church is reported to have said, "I feel as though I were a French cook, studying all the week to prepare homiletical viands which will satisfy the exacting spiritual appetites of my people." Yes, and if this be our ambition, the appetite both for the sermon and the rest will be more and more exacting, and less and less satisfied.

A peculiar joy comes for the time from great, enthusiastic gatherings, like conventions of a certain type, or union evangelistic services. The multitudes are there before the doors are open day after day, and there is a season of what certainly appears to be a great spiritual uplift. Was there ever such gospel music?

Was there ever such preaching? The sentiment of all hearts is

> "My willing soul would stay
> In such a frame as this,
> And sit and sing herself away
> To everlasting bliss."

The meeting closes, the choir is scattered, the evangelist departs, and great numbers feel a peculiar emptiness in their religious lives. The things, in every way good, seem to have failed. The people went seeking religious joy, religious entertainment; they found it, but it was evanescent, because they had no higher aim. Or the religious life they lived during these memorable days was but the echo of the songs and exhortations of singers and preacher. It was not their own experience, but the experience of others that for a while made them happy. They were humming the inspiring tunes all the day long, deaf to the noise about them, but they were rather like the sounds from a player piano. The sounds may have been their own, but not the music. There is a good old maxim which says, "Sing your own song." Better is the music which we beat out ourselves, our very own, than much sweeter music we repeat parrot-like from others. Better a creed, however small, which we have worked out, until we know that it is for us the very truth, than whole volumes of orthodoxy which some one else has created, and to which we have affixed our names, as if on dotted lines and by order of some assembly.

There is the strange joy of the ascetic who pursues his asceticism or so-called self-denial for the sake of the pleasure he finds in it. There may be in it the

further happiness which comes from loneliness or separation from the world. Most of the anchorites whom we have pitied need pity, not because of the sufferings they endured, but rather because of their non-human traits. Not a few others—not anchorites—who may be classed with them, and who in their way are quite religious, are ever seeking pleasure in pain, in crosses largely self-made, in forsaking the ways of the crowd. In life as in the theater some prefer tragedy to comedy. Blessed are they who, in order to achieve the ideals of God's kingdom in themselves and in the world, endure the cross and despise the shame. In the hours of their most exquisite agony, they may possess their most exquisite joy. But they have been seeking the kingdom and not the cross and the shame. There are those who while they may have their brief season of an Easter joy, for which they seem almost to apologize, spend most of their days in sight of the intensest agonies of the cross. They remind us of the Church of Rome, which while it hangs the sacred place for a few days at Easter and at Christmas with garlands and bright altar cloths, keeps ever before the gaze of its people the tortures of the crucifixion, the bleeding heart of Jesus, and the face of the *Mater Dolorosa,* and offers daily sacrifice of the bloody body of Jesus in the mass. Of necessity a joy like this must fail at last. Not many can endure for any length of time the bloody sweat of this gladness. There may come at last the darkest pessimism or the reaction to worldliness or even uncleanness. The history of certain forms of mysticism furnishes not a few examples.

In Christian Science and kindred theories we find the seeker for joy trying to persuade himself that the opposing things of pain and sorrow and even sin are only phantasms, that matter, the seat of evil, does not exist except as a bad thought. These convictions are reached by a mental discipline which is more akin to Buddhistic than to Christian method. Such a life may weary itself in its endeavor to reach its goal, and when the goal is reached must find its joy imperfect, because it has disregarded so many essential facts.

The world by searching does not find God. The world by searching does not find joy. But he who worships in spirit and in truth finds the everlasting God and with the everlasting God eternal joy. But how? And why?

The hour of worship brings with it the release of all that makes us men. It is the hour of liberty. We know how bondage gives unhappiness, and liberty brings boundless joy. The very idea of liberty brings joy. How the motto of the French Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," ran from village to village, from city to city, until the great hosts of the hungry and oppressed leaped for joy! It is said that the night before the slaves in the West Indies were granted their freedom they sang and shouted the whole night through. Here is the secret of the spread of anarchy and other radical ideas. Men are expecting release from the slavery of capitalism, from the prison-house of modern industrialism. We enjoy the camp in the mountains away from the haunts of men, in spite of the absence of present day conveniences, because we

can be ourselves and are free from the restrictive requirements of the society in which we move. This is a large element in the happiness of the man returned at evening from his office after a busy day, his shoes exchanged for slippers, his coat for loose dressing-sack, in the midst of his wife and children, whom he loves and who love him, with book or magazine in his hand, by his fireside. This is about all the truth in the cry, "Back to nature," and the world has accepted many erroneous interpretations of this cry, just because it has felt the stirring of deliverance from some of its chains. The meanings of all this are very simple. Liberty means simply the right to be one's self as God meant us to be. The living of our normal life unrestricted is itself joy. There is no need of artificial devices. Indeed the rapid increase of forms of entertainment is one of the many proofs that most men are not free.

Our religion speaks much of liberty. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is the truth, said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Paul, who gloried in the freedom the gospel had brought him, wrote to the Galatians, "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." A number of things interfere with that Christian liberty. Our creeds, valuable and useful as they are, created in days when Christian thinkers had a special genius for doctrinal statements, would often clip the wings of our faith or imagination or shut us up in some gilded cage for our own safety. Perhaps we have been find-

ing great comfort in the thought of a sympathizing God, suffering with us in reality in all our sufferings, and we have felt the burden of distress roll from our shoulders, when all at once we are told that we dare not think of the great God as suffering, and we hear of a heresy by the startling name of Patripassian. On Christmas day, not forgetting the divine side of our Lord, we are finding special joy in meditation upon his human nature as so like our own, when some one reminds us that we are moving unconsciously, yet surely, in the direction of Unitarianism. We are rejoicing in the love of God, when we see once more the danger signal in the hands of some faithful servant of the church, and we are urged to bear in mind that holiness and justice are the place of emphasis in the character of God.

Denominationalism has very much the same effect. For the present, so far as we can see, for a long time to come, we shall have our various churches, with their different beliefs and forms of worship and ecclesiastical organizations. Undoubtedly they have been used by God for large, beneficial results, and will still serve his purposes in the days to come. But the church of God is larger, much larger than any one denomination, and the gospel is richer and fuller than the combined doctrinal statements of all of them. It is quite natural for us to feel that we should be loyal to our own church, which in all probability is also the church of our fathers. We do our best to crowd our religious thinking within the compass of its teaching, at the expense of divine longings which live in our souls. It may be

we see truth our minds crave in some other denomination, and we must needs ask ourselves whether it is right for us to receive it, for our own has denied it, and from the lips of its teachers we must receive our instruction.

Advancing science brings to us some new discovery, some new interpretation of the old facts of life. We feel the need not of surrendering any vital truth, indeed any truth at all, but we do see that there must be some reconstruction of our thinking, some rearrangement, some change of emphasis. Again we have hobbles put on us by some of the best saints, perhaps we put them on ourselves. "The faith once for all delivered to the saints" must be protected against every sort of questioning. Withal we must hold "the form of sound words." One jot and one tittle must not be taken from the old statements, which have served the church so well for many generations. On the other hand, that same science, having spent its time in dealing almost exclusively with physical phenomena, may after a while begin to doubt the existence of spiritual phenomena, so that when we seek instruction in the ways of nature, we find our teachers putting chains on the feet of our heavenly dreams, lest they carry us too far afield. Going into the laboratory of a biological friend of mine some years ago, a friend who had given up his faith, I found him head down peering intently through a microscope, so intently that I stood for some time by his side without his knowing any one was near. At length I laid my hand on his shoulder and said, "I see

what is the matter. You are always looking down and not up."

The demands of the social life in which we live abridge our liberty. Our gospel says, "Our citizenship is in heaven: from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." The world with which we have to deal in our business, pleasures, politics does not believe in ideal things. It claims to be practical, and frankly tells us that if we are to have a place in the actual working of things, we must adjust ourselves to what is possible here and now. In many ways it forces us, by the very size of its majority to yield to its demands, and we in that very act submit to a measure of bondage. This bondage is the more painful and the more destructive of our happiness, because with all good men the longings for the heavenly life still struggle for expression and appear entirely practicable. Bondage is not nearly so destructive of happiness, if meanwhile we do not know it to exist. This is the reason why the many sedatives of the world are so popular, and we so often seek them, to drown our religious yearnings, which constantly demand attention.

The hour of worship brings the liberty for which we long, and with the liberty comes the joy. In those moments we are in the presence of God, and no priest, no theologian, no social leader stands between us and him. We are our own priests, presenting our sacrifices

in our own way; our own theologians, no longer afraid of being accused of heresy; and the makers of ideal commonwealths, which we see by the eye of faith realizable in the future. The physical universe becomes aglow with a spiritual meaning.

> "The earth is crammed with heaven
> And every common bush afire with God."

Read the best books of devotion, study the language of devotion, examine the hymns of the church, the universal church. You will find all full of the very best theology, but almost entirely free from dogmatism. All of it is the common possession of all the denominations. And often men who in the world outside made gods of the so-called practical things, or had serious doubts about any of the unseen things, find in these nobler thoughts a strange, almost inexplicable, satisfaction for their better selves. In the presence of God, we are beholding the great facts. In the world we are giving our human interpretation of the facts and trying to fit them into the merely human schemes. It is the difference between the blazing sun holding the planets in place, opening the flowers, bringing color to the pale cheek of the convalescent, killing bacteria, painting pictures, and the disputes about sun-spots, the interpretations of the origin of the great orb and its place in the heavens, the investigation of its many other mysteries, and the study of only a few of its rays in some laboratory by a physicist. In the hour of worship we have all of God and God has all of us. We have the liberty of the children of God, and our hearts bound with heavenly joy.

Not only is the whole self set free, but we enter upon our inheritance of the universe, made ours by the redemption of Jesus Christ. One of the chief causes of unhappiness is the crowding of us in by the narrowness of our environment. Although we are citizens of the eternities, we find ourselves living in small apartments; sometimes it is impossible to get light and air. With rigid economy we find it hard to feed and clothe our families. Our knowledge of things, in spite of all the aids we can summon, is of their surface. The unseen world seems far away—we know little or nothing about it save as Jesus has dropped a word here and there. Meanwhile we see hosts of men, many of whom seem altogether unworthy, gaining more than their share of the resources of the earth and not infrequently gaining it by dishonest methods, used at the expense of the welfare of the masses of the people. We are often like children reaching out our hands to grasp the sun and moon. If "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," then we must have rights there as yet not recognized. We are kings who have been dispossessed both of our throne and our estates.

But there comes to us the message of God's Word, "For all things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." This was written by a man, who either made tents for a living or lived on gifts from the people, to a people whom he had reminded of the plainness of their origin and their life. It is sufficiently comprehensive; it embraces all

we should like to have. Such a conviction or certainty does not come to us out of the dirt and sweat of toil, out of our poverty and ignorance. No, this is the vision of an ecstatic, before whose gaze for the time at least much that seems to us most real in life passes away, and the invisible appears in sight. Such visions are given us, when engaged in worship, we find God and hear him speak. The world has a new meaning for us. It is indeed God's world. It has its spiritual side, and the spiritually minded man owns it.

There is an ownership which is no true ownership. We have seen men, who had paid for the most expensive seats at the performance of some great orchestra go fast asleep in the midst of a wonderful number. We have known a man at the cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to build a house, fill it with beautiful rugs and furniture, have some expert decorate the walls, gather into it paintings and statuary the choicest; and then because he was wholly materialistic get neither rest for his body nor refreshment and refinement for his soul. A well-known painter, painting a striking mountain scene, was laughed at day after day, and now and then jeered at, because he saw something worth painting in those rocks, which to the natives had always been rocks and nothing more.

There is just as unsatisfactory an ownership of knowledge. Tennyson looked into the same startling facts which led Darwin to write his *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man,* Huxley his *Lay Sermons,* Tyndall his *Fragments of Science* and Spencer his *Synthetic Philosophy,* but Tennyson gave us his comforting and

inspiring *In Memoriam,* which has strengthened the faith of so many troubled souls, because Tennyson had a real hold on the facts and came into possession of truth to which the eyes of these great scientists were blinded. It was said of a certain distinguished scholar, some years ago, that he had so much knowledge, he did not know what to do with it. This may be true of any kind of wealth. In all such cases the man is owned by his possessions—he does not even own himself.

In the hour of worship we begin to see the real meaning in the world as we are related to it. We are in the world to find here our development and enrichment as the sons of God. As Tennyson puts it,

"Man as yet is being made."

Very true, and the world is the factory in which God completes a work begun, and only begun in our birth and ordinary living. You may be working in a mill where some exacting owner or overseer requires of you unreasonable labor at unfair wages. It may turn out that the owner or overseer comes away from his task with pockets full of gold, but with a hardened soul, with ears deaf to all the music around him. But you may have found there the very training which made a hero and saint of you. The problems of thought, which rob some great scholar of the hope of immortality and the consciousness of God's fatherhood, for another are the occasion of larger faith and brighter hope and nobler character. "All things work together for good to them that love God," and that good is our sonship to the Lord God Almighty. In

the moments of rapture we see ourselves, not as we are, but as we are meant to be, and all the universe, mysterious as many of its workings are, ministering to the completion of a plan which is our own dream and ambition now.

Our little world grows larger too. It loses its narrowness and bitterness. The small apartment is now one of the many mansions, and the trying petty business is a piece of the heavenly machinery. When one stands in the cell of Fra Angelico, monk and painter, of whom it is said that he beheld things never seen before on land or sea, there comes the recollection how when invited to make his home in the palace of the man who then ruled Florence, he declined because he was afraid the luxury and dissipation might spoil his art. The narrow ugly cell becomes very beautiful, and there comes a vision far beyond of angel forms and redeemed saints in glory. We think of a young man who held a place as a common servant in a home of wealth, and had his dwelling-place in a small room in the basement. There was but little culture or refinement in the life of the home, and all was for display. But wealth had brought to its walls a few real masterpieces, and as the young man spent his time in dusting and otherwise cleaning, his eyes would wander to these paintings, until their beauty mastered his soul, and one day he found to his surprise that he too was an artist. His little room in the basement was his first studio.

While we worship God, we become a part of a great company who adore him. We join the song of heaven and heaven seems very near. The things which we

before desired seem trivial now, the palaces of kings and the vast industries of the capitalists look like huts from the high flight to which the wings of faith lift us. If now we read Paul's great message to the Corinthians, "All things are yours," we are moved to say these so-called treasures of men are not worthy to be considered here. Beside rubies and diamonds what is rock crystal? This heavenly life is not altogether hidden behind great walls somewhere. The New Jerusalem comes down where we are, and the tabernacle of God is with us, and his presence makes our wealth.

> "Thy presence makes my paradise,
> And where thou art is heaven."

And with this presence of God must be our likeness to him for which all things exist. John gives us a conception of heaven the most blessed of all, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be. . . . We shall be like him," and of this likeness we may also sing

> "The men of grace have found
> Glory begun below."

The epistle to the Hebrews gives us this account of our present possible fellowship, "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." The church itself is not only the house of God, it is also the gate of heaven. Through this portal

we behold and hear the unseen. We walk through the gate into God's great heavenly outdoors, and enjoy fully the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.

The world is after all not a material something any more than a gallery of statuary is material. It is a spiritual world; the material simply bodies forth these great spiritual ideas. In our daily life we are tempted to see only the material; in our worship we feel that we have all the week been living in the midst of spiritual forces and did not know it. The very stones of the wilderness now appear as a stairway to heaven trodden by the feet of angels.

The hour of worship brings the harmony of all our powers. The opposite condition is the secret of very much of our unhappiness and restlessness. The soul is one constant battlefield, on which what might be called a civil war is waged. Paul describes most eloquently the strife between the flesh and the spirit. But we have a further conflict between the intellect and the emotions, between the will and either of these. It is very hard in a psychological study, in spite of the scientific atmosphere in which we carry forward our work, to keep from thinking of our souls as divided up into three or at times more than three divisions, sustaining at the best no more than a treaty relation one with the other. And there is the conflict ever on between the idealisms of religion and the moral law, the idealisms of poetry and of new and better commonwealths, and the realities and practicalities which we face in the counting-room and in the halls of state. How familiar this is to those of us who have tried

to reform outward civic and industrial conditions! In our own lives we feel the battle which we are helping to wage without. We know full well the wide chasm between the scientific mind and the religious mind, when they are found together in the same individual. Some men can keep them from fighting, but for most men either they keep up the warfare, or else at last one or the other of them is cast out.

It is hardly necessary to call attention to the discomfort, the wretchedness of such a state of affairs. The description Paul gives of the most important phase of this discord is more or less applicable to all phases. It has been said of some men, and rather truly, that they have just enough religion to make them miserable. Religious natures, interrupted by all sorts of interference within the man's own life, remind one of great torrents of water in some river bed, foaming and screaming as they find themselves dammed up by obstructions that will not give away, until they rush forth into new and hitherto unused channels, which they make for themselves, while they spread destruction in their way. For many of the vagaries of the day are like these new channels rivers sometimes make for themselves. This is simply to say where happiness cannot be found in one way, it will be found in another. The suffering soul is like the suffering body, open to all sorts of nostrums promising relief. No sublimer picture has the world beheld than that of Jesus perfectly quiet in the midst of such conflicting thoughts and influences as came to him on the eve of his crucifixion, and telling his disciples that

he would leave peace with them, even his own peace. Within his own bosom the storms of the day and of all days had been hushed to a perfect calm.

In the perfect fellowship with God which is present in sincere worship, we receive the happiness incident to the harmony of our souls. In worship the whole soul goes out after God, and there is no evidence of any disagreement or discord. The mind is alert, more so than is common, thinking the great thoughts the Holy Spirit gives, the feelings are on fire with love, the will stands on its feet with a new power to command. We are not three men; we are one. It reminds one of the harmony or unity that often comes into a group of men through the appeal of a common interest, a common difficulty, or a common joy. All that is in us was made for God, and we find an agreement in this, if nowhere else. So there comes the conviction that agreeing here, the parts of our natures need not disagree anywhere else. It has been a somewhat debated question as to where the emphasis should be placed in the life of the soul, as it comes into the presence of God. In sincere worship this question is not present. The best of the intellect, and the best of the emotions, and the best of the will are there. If we may speak of a science-faculty, and a faith-faculty, they too kneel together in adoration of the Lord God: While faith with a sublime immediacy knows that it has reached the Shechinah, the scientific soul finds here the completion of its investigations and discoveries and the explanation of much that was before

inexplicable. It may well sing the words of the old revival hymn,

> "This is the way I long have sought
> And mourned because I found it not."

The soul comes back under the touch of God to its normal self, its primal greatness. Each hour of worship is a new creation. God made no discord, when he made man in his own image. The three Persons in the Godhead are not a Triad; they are a Trinity. From creation, through redemption, until now, there has been this central harmony, an eternal harmony. His children must be like him, and when they come back to the Father's house, they do have the music of the Godhead in their very beings. We are only children anyhow very like our Father, but needing to come to him quite often through imitation of him and instruction from him, still further to develop this resemblance. Sometimes we come to him with floods of tears streaming down our cheeks and wild cries in our hearts, and his very presence lulls us to rest. No explanation of the mysteries that have troubled us, no solution of vexatious problems, perhaps no word of comfort comes to us, perhaps we do not call to mind the words spoken aforetime to the saints in the Bible record and elsewhere. No, but his harmonious, peaceful self, like the presence of Jesus in the storm on Galilee, quiets us by simply restoring us to ourselves. During the Napoleonic wars, while the cathedral at Antwerp was used for military purposes and war was raging without, the chimes in the cathedral tower still rang out the sweet harmonies of the church under the

skillful hands of the chimer. So the discord of the world is not necessarily our own, under God's touch there may always be music.

It is not too much to add that the voice (not voices) of God in us brings the harmony. We get a strange notion, as we go about our daily work, that many voices, confusing and discordant voices, are speaking to us. They are only one voice—the voice of God, which is indeed as the sound of many waters, an organ of innumerable stops. At last we discover that the voice which speaks to us in the hour of holy communion is that we heard before, and that it is one, and as he speaks, our souls are all in tune with this infinite harmony. A strange hush came over the troubled soul of the poor mad Saul as David played on his harp. Often to us comes a strange quiet as we hear the hymns of the church. Even so the voice of God, which is the source of all the music of all the ages in heaven and in earth, brings to us its own harmony.

Whatever we may have been carrying about with us, out of harmony with God and so out of harmony with ourselves, and bringing into our lives the discord which has so disturbed us, must in our worship, depart. We find no place for it and it is quite easy to give it up. We desire to hear nothing in our souls but the echo of his own blessed words. The loves of life in a new ambition grow pure and the businesses of life become clean and honest. I remember a great cathedral choir of some two hundred voices accompanied by a good orchestra of many instruments, which I

occasionally heard in my boyhood. The choir had a remarkable director. Under his leadership and mastered by many well-trained leading voices, I have known men and women with voices somewhat harsh and unmusical, entering the choir, to have their voices swallowed in the sweet music as they added to the great volume of the song. So as God speaks in our souls, every discordant note is changed to sweetest music. We read "Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." Beautiful indeed was her life now. Where God is, where God speaks, the shrieking, hissing demons cannot stay.

In worship we see the world as a harmonious whole: here are order, music, beauty. On our busy days, we are like men who are so close to an orchestra, that they hear certain instruments to the exclusion of others, or they watch the movements of first this performer and then that, and miss the music altogether. Our experiences are fragmentary and partial. Life is fragmentary and partial, made up of dull routine and monotonous. Worship brings to us that larger view of life in which routine and monotony are no more, where the partial and fragmentary things become parts of a perfect whole. We hear the great symphony the orchestra is playing, and forget that the individual performers and their instruments are there. The Bible everywhere urges us to view things in their completeness, and if as yet they are incomplete, to think of them not as they are, but as they are yet to be, and faith can see the completed whole as if it were already here. It is said the zoölogist can, with a single bone of some

extinct animal before him, present an outline of the entire animal form. Faith needs only a small start to make it possible for it to see not only the visible things as one great whole, but also that vast invisible life of which it is but a little part. Yes, a vast vision of beauty, filled with harmonious sounds, spreads out before the believing worshiper's gaze and he can sing exultantly,

> "The promised land, from Pisgah's top,
> I now exult to see:
> My hope is full, O glorious hope!
> Of immortality."

Most inspiring is Paul's conception of all things given us in his letter to the Colossians: "For in him (Jesus Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and unto him (with him in view); and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together." What Paul saw, every saint in the act of worship sees, a Christ who is all in all, or if you prefer to say the same thing in a somewhat different way, a God who is all in all, but whom we see and understand in the face of Jesus Christ. But this is not the view of the worldly man. No, the earth is a sphere which finds its end in the exploitation of the capitalist, the toil of the laborer, the discoveries of the scholar, the ambitions of the conqueror. The very heavens seem to some men to have been made for the telescope of the astronomer, and the laboratory of the physicist. Even so the uni-

verse is not without its charm, not without its interest for every order of mind. But in it all much more is hidden than we ever see. There are great stretches of mysteries, annoying mysteries we do not expect ever to understand. There are things which hurt, things which to our unaided sight seem unwise, and at times even wrong. Disease and famine and pestilence come. Periods of prosperity are immediately followed by periods of depression. There may seem to us to be more of discord than of music. But in the sanctuary, in the closet, there comes Paul's vision of a universe which finds its meaning in Jesus Christ, in Jesus Christ crucified, which must ultimately obey his behest, which has not been unfolding merely in the past, but which is still unfolding in accord with his will, and must at last be a perfect expression of the will of God as revealed in his Son. Immediately all that is ugly and unattractive goes. The universe is but a great frame to enclose the glorious presence of Jesus Christ. We are seeing him everywhere.

> "Where'er I am, where'er I move,
> I meet the object of my love."

The world becomes for us a splendid harmony, because we see in our lives, when we gather for prayer and praise, or in the quiet of our private fellowship with God, how all the factors that enter into its varied activities have had a strange influence in shaping our characters and always for good, while we look at the things which are not seen and trust in our Lord. It is just the kind of world, with all its defects and imperfections, writers of theodicies have said might be

a school or discipline for humanity. And so it is, if you think of God as in this world using it as tools for the shaping of character and destiny, and also of the men being shaped as gladly submissive to the divine purpose. The time does come, and it comes while he is dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, when the saint sees that this world has not only fed and clothed him and given him a shelter from the heat and the cold, but that, taken as a whole with a most beautifully harmonious purpose, it has had very much to do with making him the saint that he is. And to this blessed sainthood have contributed in the most harmonious way things apparently most contradictory, the world's hates and loves, poverty and riches, hunger and plenty, sickness and health, births and deaths, defeats and triumphs. We cannot say that this is the worst possible world, but we see it to be a world made by the Father for his children, in his hands perfectly adapted to the purpose he had in view, a world by which the Father makes the children ready for a world which is perfect and eternal. With these things in our minds, the world grows very beautiful to us, even its graves and its battlefields are lovely. In our moments of ecstasy we not only look upward to the heavenly fields with rejoicing and glad anticipation, but we look over the fields of earth with happy memories and sincere thanksgiving. All along the road we have come we can see the Ebenezers we have raised, with joy we should have never known, had not this world given us the opportunity.

And the sense of the world's harmony increases

with the thought, already in part presented, that its harmony is only a part of a yet larger harmony. The spectroscope has revealed to us that all worlds throughout the vast expanse are made of practically the same things, the materials being in different stages of development. The same physical forces hold them in their places and bring them on their journeys. No world has much right to boast of itself as over against another. May we not say then that, wherever and whatever heaven may be, this world has in it all the possibilities of that blessed place, that in all that is essential it resembles it, that the saints here have no reason to fear they may feel uncomfortable and unhappy even for a moment because of any awkwardness in that blessed estate. Tennyson, you will remember, speaks of this world as through prayer bound, as by gold chains, about the feet of God. In those best moments, when the child of God appears before the throne of grace, and meets his Father, these things seem true without any reasoning—he comes to them intuitively. The earth and heaven seem so near together, they are as though they were, if not one, twin orbs for him. It does not seem unnatural that he should hold converse with angels, and he feels as though the loved ones who have gone from him are only in the next room. That God should have spoken to the prophets and humbler men in the past or should speak to him now, is not unreasonable or fanciful. Wherever God is or can be is one harmonious whole, and so he has a sublime certainty that without alarm he might go forth anywhere within the confines of

space. Death itself therefore can have no terror. The principle that guides and controls and fills all is love. And so the world ceases to be a vale of tears, and becomes a land of Immanuel, through which he marches to a yet fairer and more fertile land. He rejoices as he goes.

When we come before God in worship, we discover that we are in harmony with the universe and the universe is in harmony with us, and we are happy in the world just as it is. We are accustomed to hearing about the struggle for life, the battle with the terrific forces, when we find nature "red in tooth and claw." We see it not only in the life of nature, but in the economic and industrial world, in the conflict of nation with nation. We have ourselves been cast into some lion's den, driven out to measure swords with some gigantic foe. At times we come to the conclusion that the universe is against us, and we against the universe, that at least this is true of our part of the universe. Our only hope is in the escape from it all into a place called heaven, which we do not think of as in the universe, not at any rate as we find it now. Nature looks to us like an enormous sphinx, or as one great philosopher has put it, like a great Will without intelligence and without heart, constantly running amuck. It is not possible for us to see design or what we call divine providences. It would all of it be quite interesting, if we did not have to put up with it and to live in it. It is like a cage of lions most entertaining, so long as the lions remain in the cage and we are on the outside. But in this instance we are in the cage. There is har-

mony enough in the world, but it is out of harmony with us. As for ourselves, we go into life with the conviction always with us that we are here to fight, fight everything. There is never a peaceful moment. We are taught to sing,

> "We should suspect some danger nigh,
> Where we possess delight."

In spite of ourselves, we become dualistic. We may place ourselves in the ranks of Ormuzd, but Ahriman is near with his cohorts, and for a while he will be master of the very things that come nearest to us and our interests.

In the presence of our God, there comes a wonderful change. Much that we saw and heard was true, but now we see much more. In the midst of all the madness and wildness stands the cross. It is saying, "Here is the symbol of the force which shall ultimately control all things." It is this which brings harmony into the world, into humanity, and between humanity and the world. In this sign we conquer, not by the victory of warfare, but by the victory of reconciliation. There are laws above other laws, forces above other forces. What terrific power one faces in an electric power-house; there are dials registering, and there are warning signs on every hand. But you have not here read the whole story. Something else is happening, for gentle hands are elsewhere turning on the light and heat in reduced measure, reduced to meet a human need. The redemption of man is power, the power of God, but it is his power unto salvation. Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth,"

but in that moment he is sending his disciples out on ministries of mercy. It is this cross which so appears that we see nothing else. It reminds one of the vision of the writer of the *Star-Spangled Banner,* who knew as he looked out from the midst of the enemies of his country, that so long as he could see the flag waving all was well. In his epistle to the Colossians, Paul says, "And having made peace through the blood of his cross by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."

In worship, we feel the forces of righteousness. We know they are stronger than the world, are the controlling factors. They speak in thunder tones in us through our consciences. They speak in thunder tones in nature. We see that as we ourselves suffer, if we disobey the moral law, so retribution comes to the very fields. We read the prophecies which threaten drought and pestilence and famine, and we see the meaning of them now. We believe that the stars did in their courses fight against Sisera, because Sisera was against the kingdom of God! In the house of prayer we not only behold the cross, and are thrilled by its message of grace; we are in the presence of Sinai as well, not afraid, but rejoicing in its precepts and believing in its triumph. This Sinai is in the world also, above all material things in its rule, and commanding at last all governments and rulers. In the house of prayer, we never doubt that the right shall conquer, though we may often have doubted elsewhere. But we see now a world not haphazard, not running as by chance,

not in danger of a fall. It is an orderly world, accomplishing the divine will, obedient to every principle of righteousness, and subservient to the welfare of mankind. We see what John saw, when he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, "A new heaven and a new earth." It was there all the while, but we did not have eyes to see. We are now in harmony with the world, the world with us. Those highest things in us which drive out to duty, which protest against wrong and cruelty, which demand that the children of God shall be dealt with as children, are in the world also, while the things in the world we did not understand are explained in the cries of our consciences and their longing for the victory of the right and the truth.

We use in our worship materials from the world outside and in the use of them gain access to God. Those are eloquent words in which the Old Testament prophet describes the splendid materials, brought in from many places, to make more beautiful and even more divine the temple of Jehovah. It does not occur to him that any of this material could be devilish or merely material. It will cease to be wood or gold or brass; it is now temple, house of God. We may know that such material may elsewhere serve ignoble purposes. It may be that the pews in the church were made by a corporation, which, along with other firms in competition for the contract, offered the preacher or the chairman of the building committee graft. Still we know that this is no necessary part of their presence there, and that they gain after a while a peculiar sanctity. Thus does the world become a part of that

which is highest in us, a part of our real selves. We begin to realize that we do not need to go to heaven to find in some real sense pearly gates and golden streets, and we are overwhelmed by all the meaning involved in the opening words of the book of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," the same God who afterwards commanded his people to build a temple and prescribed in minute detail the forms of worship. Our hearts are filled with gladness in knowing that we do not after all lead a ghostly life, a life out of the flesh, a life of unreality, when we spend much time in worship, that indeed we are then leading the most real life, because the material things which before were so impermanent and unsubstantial, now gain for themselves a measure of permanence, like the stone as it leaves the sculptor's hands having become "a thing of beauty," and therefore "a joy forever."

There is an experience so rich that the world without becomes a spiritual world, and our bodies become spiritual bodies. It is a well-known fact that Beethoven wrote his greatest music after he became so deaf he could not hear a sound of the piano or violin. Mozart forgot his food as he worked out heavenly harmonies. The most genuine fasting has been of those who have forgotten their food in devotion to higher concerns, in their earnest endeavor to decide some great issue of life. It may well be said that the world is spiritual rather than material and that we are spirits and simply have bodies. Paul could say of some of his experiences, in spite of tortures

visited upon him, "whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth." And Shakespeare writes,

> "There's not the smallest which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubims;
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly clothe it in, we cannot hear it."

But here is our trouble, the muddy vesture of decay still grossly clothes it in, and most of the time we are seeing the orbs both large and small, but do not hear the angel song, and while our hearts break with the desire to see and hear within the veil, we move in the midst of material things with our physical life asserting itself. This spell is broken, when we worship God. God himself is a Spirit, he wakes up our spirits. God the Spirit created all things and he shines through all the works of his hands.

There is no greater misfortune than the injecting of things wholly material, or made wholly material, into the sacred hours of the church. Ritualism may go so far that forms and ceremonies, largely physical or material, obscure all else—worship is a matter of incense, stained glass windows, pictures and the like, to the utter forgetfulness of any of the things here symbolized. The Sabbath morning may be taken up with social theories, with questions of bread and meat and clothes, with housing and play-grounds—all of value but in themselves material. Or the orphanage or some other charity commands our attention, to be fixed upon what are for the moment almost entirely

physical needs. Or the financial side of the church is so presented that we are not only tempted to think of the church as wholly a business proposition, but for the whole hour our minds wander away from things spiritual. Of course there are churches where a tendency to foolish or excessive clothing leads to the same result. Now I do not forget how more or less all these things have their place in the house of God. Some ritual we must have, and all things must be done decently and in order. The church has to deal with every human need, it must be the Good Samaritan, and never either priest or Levite. It must sustain its own institutions and pay its bills, if for no other reason as a matter of common honesty. And there is a benediction in the desire to appear clean and neatly robed after the toil of the week. But the worship may be so conducted that a fine spirituality may permeate all these more material things, which may themselves be so presented and so considered as to be acts of worship. As King Saul was mastered by the ecstasy of the company of the prophets, until he too prophesied, so the material and physical demands of the church may be so filled by the presence and power of the Spirit, that they may be as resplendent with his glory as the hymn or the prayer or the Holy Word.

And the worship may become so carnal that the spiritual fades away. All is for display or vainglory. We wish the world to know how much we pay for our music, or that our soprano was once a famous opera star, that our pastor is paid the largest salary in the state, and is a man of rare scholarship and still rarer

eloquence, that the auditorium is crowded at every service, and that we have a larger number of the rich and socially prominent than any other church. This may be another application of the Master's famous saying, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." We may carry with us to the church great bundles of sensuous material, great masses of darkness to add to the darkness already there. Or we may carry with us the spiritual and great floods of light. I remember preaching for a week in a little unfinished country church. Each one took with him his own chair, and each group carried a lantern to light their way to the church, and to light the church after their arrival. So the glory of the temple depends quite largely on the glory of the living stones. In some churches you feel the power of God as soon as you enter, you are never tempted to gaze about. In others the atmosphere of the hall, the theater, the social gathering takes hold upon you. Sad indeed is it for us when we hope to find all spiritual, and we find all material, even the altar of God.

But after all what means it that all becomes suddenly spiritual as we worship God? He is in the church as in a body and fills it with his light and power. It is as when a man's soul gives thought and feeling to his face, and makes his hands and feet and poise reveal his character, so that you after a while know him as he walks away in the distance. You have seen the eternal Soul in all that makes the church a church; you know he is in all the rest of his body, that no part has been paralyzed and lost its connection. You have seen his face, you

will see that you have been looking at his feet and his hands and did not know it. You had before thought they were just feet and hands. If one were to go into Westminster Abbey, not knowing what to expect there, and suddenly should come upon the numerous tombs and monuments, not arranged in any remarkably orderly way, and looking altogether rather untidy and unclean, one might turn away without any awakening of interest. But go near and read the names of departed saints and heroes, Wesley, and Tennyson, and Livingstone, and all the rest. All at once they seem to come forth from the dead. You are surrounded by a goodly company. You linger in such hallowed associations. All becomes strangely beautiful. So does the church become the dwelling-place of God, instinct with life and beauty, and so does the world around us. God is near at every turn. There is nothing ugly and unattractive now. Life is one constant song of rejoicing.

There is an added joy—a wondrous joy—in the new thought of God revealed in Jesus Christ as our Father. There are many ways to think of God. We may look upon him as an unknown somewhat, an algebraic x or y. Life is one great mystery and there is no trail through it. Perhaps we go only a part of the way with Job, the darker part of the way, when he exclaims, "Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him." We are not quite sure that "he knoweth the

way that I take," and that "when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." We are confident there is something there, more than we can see, but we do not know whether that something is a person or a force or a law or a general resultant of the things we do see and know. At times the great Unknown does not in the least disturb us. We are indifferent; that is all. We are interested in the details of our daily life. Sometimes as we look into the great haze that surrounds us, there appears to us some startling specter like the specter of Brocken, and it may be that here too we are looking at our own dark dreams, out of which we have made a kind of deity of our own. At times, we hear the storm raging, and know not what mischief is abroad, and we become strangely like people of the north of Europe, when in times of unusual tempest, they revert to the beliefs of their heathen ancestors and ours, as they say, "Odin is abroad tonight."

Convinced of the personality of God, some are under the spell of the sterner side of his character, and are blind to his tenderness, love, and care. They see his infinite power and are afraid. They adopt the words of Jesus as their own, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt," not with sweet trust in the Fatherly love and wisdom, but with a grim, stoical determination to submit to the inevitable. They do not complain, because they are afraid to complain. They fear to love too much loved ones and friends, because they think they may be robbed of all such treasures. Others are charmed or terrified by his wisdom, skill, and in-

genuity. It is not a wisdom which concerns them personally, which works out a beautiful scheme for each child's life, but a wisdom plans great epochs in history, sets up one nation and puts down another, makes great worlds, creates and combines tremendous forces, or delicately fashions those secret things, the hidden glory of which the microscope only partially reveals. Meanwhile, the constant fear arises lest, wandering as one must through these fields of wisdom, one may by unintentional blundering misuse the things which God has made, and scatter destruction around. It is written in the Bible and in the heavens and on the earth, "Be sure your sin will find you out," and this is about all some ever see of God. He is a detective ferreting out every, even the slightest, violation of his laws, delighting in the apprehension of the criminal and making helpless or destroying the workers of iniquity.

It is only in Jesus Christ that we see God as he truly is, wise and strong, and righteous, but more, a God of love, our Father. This is the knowledge of him which comes to us, in our hours of worship. In my early school days, I had a teacher whom all the boys—myself among the rest—greatly feared. He was exacting in the length of the lessons and in the required preparation of them, unreasonable in his punishment of the least misbehavior or disobedience of his orders—this was our estimate of him. One day he asked me to remain after class to my great affright, and surprised me by inviting me to have supper at his home the following night. Of course, I went with some trepidation. Just after I arrived and was greeted by the

professor, his only son came in. They embraced each other and then for some moments romped and played with each other, like two school-boys. It was as though a veil had dropped from his character, and he appeared as he really was. After that whatever he did and said had a new interpretation. His apparently severe demands were only the requirements of a fatherly friend, longing to make of every boy a clean, heroic man. Such a changed conception of God comes to the man who finds his presence in Christian worship. He sees him in a different place, and it is the place where he best reveals himself—the place where, speaking after the manner of men, he can be, and is, himself. He sees him now, not in the storm and earthquake, not in the laboratory and observatory, not in the retributions which follow in the wake of lust and dishonesty, but in the cross of Jesus Christ.

"This, this is the God we adore,
  Our faithful, unchangeable Friend,
Whose love is as great as his power,
  And neither knows measure nor end:
'Tis Jesus, the First and the Last,
  Whose mercy will guide us safe home,
We'll praise Him for all that is past,
  And trust Him for all that's to come."

But remember that in that cross all the attributes of God are found.

"Here the whole Deity is known,
  Nor dares a creature guess
Which of the glories brighter shone,
  The justice or the grace."

An indescribable joy comes into the soul with the consciousness that this great God, omnipotent, all-wise,

just, holy, is our God, full of love, and that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." You may think of that other precious revelation of God which Isaiah gives us, "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you." What before was terrible, now adds to the value of the fatherhood and motherhood of God. The terrible things are our defense. They quiet us. They ward off our enemies. The roar of the lioness strikes terror in the heart of the hunter, but it is music to her cubs. We feel a peculiar strength. The cross is the center of divine power. Love masters all the resources at its command. Fatherhood is the assurance of all the fullness of God. Some years ago in one of our Southern states, after long continual rains, many of the rivers and creeks were out of their banks. A woman, living near the bank of one of the rivers in a little cottage, noticed the stream was rising rapidly, and decided to cross the railroad trestle and go to the home of a friend, which stood on much higher ground. She had lived there so long she knew the schedule of all the trains, but she had forgotten that just at that time they were all out of schedule. When she was half way across, she heard the whistle of the engine just around the curve. It was too late for the engineer to stop. But she had her infant in her arms. Like a flash, she dropped between the great timbers of the trestle, holding on by one hand until she was rescued. The mother love made possible this wonderful feat; this made her strong and quick to think. But for the babe she might have failed.

There is joy in the fellowship with God. No life is complete in itself. We are truly human only in so far as we are parts of society. So there is no keener suffering than that which accompanies loneliness. This crowded world too often leaves us to ourselves. Not long ago the *New York Tribune* had these lines:

> "I thought the house across the way
> Was empty, but since yesterday
> Crêpe on the door makes me aware,
> That some one has been living there!"

We have here but one of many illustrations of how the selfish demands of life interfere with the most human, and therefore the most divine things of life. The larger part of the fellowship we find is in club-rooms and afternoon teas.

When we walk along the streets or in other ways come in contact with other human beings, we touch each other in the things distinctly non-essential, and rarely does the secret place of one find an answer from the secret place of another soul. Just as we may feed on so-called foods, and yet for lack of nourishment in them slowly die of starvation, so we may have associations with multitudes of people in a great city while the longing for companionship is never satisfied. We come together as grocers or bankers or members of the same political party, or sect, as those who live on the same street, but not as men and women with infinite yearnings, with a divine restlessness, the children of God. It sometimes happens that even those so near to us in our homes are far away from us, and the loneliness in such cases hurts the more, because we are

constantly expecting what we do not find, only to be more and more bitterly disappointed.

Quite probably it is our own fault that we are lonely in the crowd. It is we who are uncompanionable. We do not know how to open our hearts, to break down the prison doors of mere propriety. We are in need of some one—and there are such in the world—to open our own souls to ourselves as well as to others, for companionship is a mutual thing. It may be we have an unfortunate temperament, or possibly great sorrows or great questionings have buried themselves in our hearts, and we fear others will not appreciate them, do not care to be disturbed by them. Or the most sacred companionship of life has been broken, and unfortunately we cannot see beyond the grave; and no other voice can bring cheer. One of the most pathetic things ever written is the account of his wife's death given by Moncure D. Conway in his autobiography closing with these words, "But I write no more; that way darkness lies."

We never grow weary with thinking of such companionship as that of Damon and Pythias, of David and Jonathan, of Paul and Timothy, of Jesus and John, whom Jesus loved. Here are subjects for orators and poets and artists and dramatists. Some of these friendships were wholly unexpected, where tastes seemed to differ, where ambitions seemed to cross, where education was according to antagonistic conceptions, or where the social status was very far apart. Blessed are they who no matter of whom born, nor where born, nor in what conditions, can say with the

Latin dramatist, "I am a man and I consider nothing that is human foreign to myself," or with a much greater, the apostle to the Gentiles, "where there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." For here is the secret of companionship, to find that human element, each in the other, which has nothing to do with wealth or poverty or nationality or color of skin, or even culture. It is interesting how often men, hardly acquainted with each other, have formed lasting friendships in summer camps, in army tents, or on long journeys. Such friendships are among the very richest blessings of life.

But companionship at its best looks to an ideal found only in the friendship of God, the friendship of Jesus Christ, a companionship, a friendship which finds its deepest realization in the ecstatic hours of worship. The search for a companion, for a friend, is a search for God, and we are likely to find him in his house. If there is joy in finding an earthly friend with whom we can walk in closest fellowship, how much higher is the rapture of the ideal companionship. I remember a home I used now and then to visit, where all the environment was as humble as it could well be, although everything was spotless, where an aged husband and wife had lived together for more than half a century in closest, sweetest fellowship. It was a joy just to sit there and look at them together, even when no word of affection passed between them. For us there is an unspeakable joy in simply being with God, with Jesus Christ, in some place of worship, how-

ever humble. A minister of our church tells how just a few nights before his little seven-year-old daughter sickened and died, she stole into his study, when he was very busy, and as she sat on the floor and looked up into his face she said, "I won't disturb you. I just want to be with you a little while." Paul can do no higher thinking of heaven than when he speaks of having a "desire to depart and be with Christ," or of being "absent from the body" and "present with the Lord," or "forever with the Lord." If this is the heavenly life, what greater bliss can earth afford? Perhaps no more bitter cry of anguish was ever heard than that which came from the lips of a brilliant skeptic in the darkest hour of his unbelief, "The Great Companion is dead." No greater grief could come to any of us than to have pass out of our lives forever the only perfect companionship. On the other hand, what gladness, what surpassing joy if, as the years go by and our own lives develop and enlarge themselves, we mean more to God and God means more to us, and so the companionship, always blessed, grows richer and sweeter.

Thus in very many ways does worship bring its joys. We should be able always to say, "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" A distinguished minister tells how once while he stood on the hill at Edinburgh and looked out on that wonderful scene which surrounds the great city, a cobbler climbed the hill, and, as he lighted his short-stemmed pipe, said, "I live down there among people who swear and use obscene language all day, and I find it needful

now and then to climb this hill and look out at that scene, and know that I am not altogether material." Such a place for the soul is Mt. Zion, whence we have the vision of heaven and the face of God.

"I ask no higher state:
  Indulge me but in this,
And soon or later then translate
  To my eternal bliss."

Lecture VI

THE CALL TO SPECIAL SERVICE IN THE HOURS OF WORSHIP

Lecture VI

THE CALL TO SPECIAL SERVICE IN THE HOURS OF WORSHIP

IN the best of these hours of worship and communion with God come visions of the divine program, larger insight into the truth, and calls to special tasks. Such experiences probably come to all who talk with God face to face. Examples are quite numerous in the Bible times. Here is Moses tending the flocks of his father-in-law, Jethro, out under the blue Eastern sky by day and the bright stars by night, no doubt, like most men of those ancient days, worshiping the God of his fathers. He has the vision of the burning-bush, hears the voice which reveals to him the true character of Jehovah, and receives his appointment as the guide and deliverer of his people. On the mount, in an hour of ecstasy, he receives the law, the moral precepts which still are the basis of all right conduct. The psalmist is greatly perplexed because the wicked flourish and the righteous at the same time are troubled. He is almost ready to give up God and his service, but a new outlook comes to him when he enters the temple for sacrifice and worship. "Then saw I their end," he tells us. A new meaning comes into life, and he is ready now for his place in the kingdom of God. Samuel, left in the temple by his mother for any

training or work assigned him by Eli, the priest, but enjoying above all the privilege of being constantly in the house of the Lord, in the blessedness of continuous worship, hears the voice of Jehovah which brings in a new era in the history of the Jews, and puts him in a place of high honor and responsibility. Wondrous hour was that when he said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Amos, the herdsman, who lived in the open like Moses in the days of his call, seeing such visions by day and night as came out of the silence into his loneliness, claiming to be neither a full-fledged prophet, nor yet a prophet's son, getting ready for a place among the officially recognized prophets, yields to the divine summons and brings to the people of his day, both high and low, such denunciation for sin and such offers of mercy as have been appropriately repeated by preachers of righteousness in every age since. First Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, and made, in a moment of worship, extraordinary confession for his sins and the sins of the people, receiving forgiveness and perfect cleansing, and then he heard the voice which asked, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" He went out from that presence to be the greatest of all the ancient prophets.

We find the same truth prominent in the New Testament. Luke tells us that, after a season of prayer on the mountain-top, Jesus called to him the twelve and sent them forth. He had told them, according to the Acts of the Apostles, that they were to be witnesses to him in Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth, but they were to hear

the real call to their supreme task, when day by day they remained together in worship and prayer. The old call becomes a new call now. While the young church in Antioch was in prayer, the Holy Ghost gave direction that Paul and Barnabas were to be separated to a special work, and these two heroes of the kingdom of God became foreign missionaries. The church was not particularly strong as yet, but they sent the best they had. This in all probability they could not have brought themselves to do, but for the inspiration and warmth of a great hour of worship. Paul reminds Timothy that the faith he had dwelt first in his mother and grandmother, and that from a child he had known the Holy Scriptures. His home had all the while been a place of prayer, and unquestionably it was out of such seasons of prayer as he daily enjoyed he received the call to labor with Paul. The great apostle was a devout man, had punctiliously observed all the requirements of the law, was faithful in attendance on the worship of the temple and synagogue. He was on the way to perform what was then to him a religious duty, and had before caught the vision attendant upon the death of Stephen. It was natural that he should recognize a divine summons in that voice that broke through the heavens, as he fell to the earth. His first question was, "Who art thou, Lord?" On the housetop in prayer, Peter had the vision which made him know the kingdom of God was for Gentile as well as Jew and was quickly followed by the call to take the gospel to the Gentile centurion, Cornelius. John was in the Spirit, on the Lord's Day, when he had unfolded

to him that marvelous apocalypse or revelation which gave to him a new place in the kingdom of God, and appointed him a messenger to the church in all ages.

Ever since the apostolic days, numerous have been the examples in the long list of distinguished saints and prophets, bringing to us the same lessons we have learned from the Old and New Testament Scriptures. In the various reforms and forward movements of the church, the leaders have come out of the church itself, though often corrupt, from among devout men reverently engaging in all the services of the house of prayer. It will be sufficient to name just three illustrious and very familiar names, Martin Luther, a devoted monk faithful to his every religious duty, and seeking constantly by every means rest for his soul, and who in Wartburg castle, alone with God and the Bible, largely worked out the great German reformation; John Wesley omitting no requirement of worship and making for himself extra seasons of prayer, commissioned in a moment of conscious communion with God to do a special work for the English-speaking people; General Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, going out after neglected masses, but who had been a devout Methodist and in that church for years had found God and his Son Jesus Christ. The men called to the ministry almost without exception come out of homes where the parents are devout and where the family are gathered each day for prayer and praise. In one Christian home, the head of which was well known throughout the South, every son has received a special call to a great task, and even two negro butlers,

employed from time to time, have entered the ministry, after very careful preparation for that service. In nearly all genuine revivals God finds deaconesses and missionaries and preachers. At Student Volunteer Conventions, in seasons of consecration and prayer, without outward constraint, men and women, moved by the Spirit speaking to them within, deliberately sign their names to the well-known pledge. If we might call the roll of the leaders of the church, we should hear in the responses voice after voice declaring that, in some hour of sincere heartfelt worship, they gave themselves to the work of the church.

It would seem, the gospel being what it is, that every worshiper should in the place and hour of prayer receive either a call to a new field or a fresh call with a new consecration to an old field. So much of our worship is so selfish, for our personal delectation for the present time, and our salvation in the eternal future that we are shutting out all possibility of hearing God's call to serve the world. We have reversed in such cases the Master's words about himself, and say instead, "I came not to minister, but to be ministered unto," and it takes all the resources of heaven to perform such ministration. Worship is so frequently wholly formal, in other words it is not worship at all. There is the employment of forms, of prayers, of hymns, created by men who walked with God in seasons when God was very near, but they are not now accompanied in their use by similar experiences. The worship may be sectarian or sectional. In it there is no place for the thought of humanity in the broadest

sense, humanity with all its innumerable needs. The thought is of one's denomination, state, nation, family. The call comes to men for whom as for Paul there is "neither Jew, nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free," and who are ready with the Good Samaritan to minister to the nameless sufferer, just because he is a man and a sufferer.

More than interesting is it, that in the secular life the men who seem, as if by accident, to run into some great discovery or to find some peculiarly attractive and suitable field of labor, have nearly always been faithfully discharging their regular duties. The wonderful development in cotton mill machinery is to be credited almost wholly to those who have toiled in the mills, earning their bread by the sweat of their brows. The discoveries in chemistry and astronomy are made by those who are about their business, often going about their ordinary tasks in spite of great weariness. The discoverers live among the stars and in the midst of retorts and test-tubes. The greatest musical, artistic, poetic compositions have come from those whose lives were given over to the very humdrum and monotony of the commonplaces of their calling. The patent office is full of ingenious contrivances that have not worked, the inventions of men of real genius. The plodders, often unnoticed by the world, just because they faithfully do their work, find their orbits, at times passing through fields of shining meteors, and surprise the world and themselves. The pinnacles of real lasting fame are occupied by men who neglected no task,

and were always found in the path of duty however rough.

> "The heights by great men reached and kept
> Were not attained by sudden flight,
> But they, while their companions slept,
> Were struggling upward through the night."

When we come to ask ourselves why these things should be true, the answer is not difficult. The operations of God are conducted according to law and order. Within the compass of this law, God's plans and purposes are found. Here, too, what we call miracles have been performed, for nowhere can God deny himself. Here, too, must we conduct our lives, find our work, make our discoveries. It is very necessary to know these laws, these purposes, and to adjust ourselves to them. The more thorough this adjustment, or better, obedience, may be, the larger the probability of a life of success or even of real greatness. The correct attitude, whether we face God in nature or grace, is that of Paul in the supreme crisis of his life, when he asked with full surrender, and abandon, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Two mistakes are made. On the one hand are those who are dreaming of success by some kind of chance, or by a providence which, properly interpreted, is no better than chance. Does not only the world, but the universe, the eternal order of things, yes, God himself, owe them a living, or a place, and will it not all come to them in due time? And so they go on fully expecting that something will turn up, and they will not always be unknown men. On the other hand, are those who seek to break loose

from what they think to be the narrowness and restriction of the divine order, and to do something extraordinary, or to seek some unusual employment. The biographies of the great men in every line of endeavor bring the distinct surprise, that so few unusual things made up their lives and they trod for the most part the common paths. Not only of Jesus but of all other great men, we are prone to say, "Is not this the carpenter? Do we not know his family? Can any good come out of Nazareth?"

In the beaten path of the regular religious life, the great discoveries are made, as they are made in the secular life. Many things have been missed because of absence from the prayer-meeting on Wednesday or the worship of the Lord's Day, or because the daily study of the Bible was neglected, or the morning and evening prayer was hastily or thoughtlessly said. Sometimes the sermon seems dull; perhaps the pastor preaches it, and he is never quite interesting. Or the prayers at the prayer-meeting are worded always in the same terms, and quite poorly worded at that. Or the singing is in every way faulty and the hymns are unwisely selected. We think it may be just as well to stay away from all this. Not so, for in those places God is operating, God is speaking. This is his orderly way of doing things. This is his church, against which the gates of hell cannot, will not prevail. We wish at times that we might have been with the disciples in the early days of the church, but the things they did in those days were the same as those very experiences which we now so often find monotonous. They

had their prayer-meetings, their breaking of bread, their sermons, their church meetings for the consideration of things concerning the general welfare. Through these the Spirit made known the truth, revealed God's will, called men to special fields of labor. Just as when the two disciples were walking toward Emmaus, talking over the recent incidents which troubled them so much, Jesus drew near and walked with them, so as we tread the beaten path to-day, he comes to us again, and when we least expect it, he speaks to us of his cross, his resurrection, the coming glory.

Everywhere are those who expect to find God and receive his special message only under circumstances more or less unusual. Every pastor has known many of his flock to be present at all the services of the revival, indeed to make the rounds of the churches where revivals are being held at the usual season, but to be absent from the regular services of the church, or at least to attend them quite irregularly. They are more than enthusiastic about some great evangelistic campaign. At all these times they are expecting something unusual to happen, something which they do not expect at other times. Disappointments are not uncommon. There are experiences, sorrows, losses, bereavements, joys which do make possible our learning what otherwise we should not know, not so much because God comes to us in any new, unusual sense, but because we are ready for his voice. We all know how there are times, when the old church, with no marks of beauty on it before, suddenly has a strange charm about it, the preacher tiresome before seems

eloquent, the music uplifting, and God's voice so clear and distinct that we are sure he speaks even to us. The seed is the same: the soil is different. We came before with no sense of need, in the grip of earthly concerns, minds wandering over all the paths of the sky and the world. We come now, hungering and thirsting, the glory of all things earthly having vanished from our gaze, and with nothing remaining to us but Jesus Christ and him crucified. The thorn in the flesh made way for God into the life of Paul, but God was not different. We have a right to expect God on all occasions, and according to our faith, ourselves, will be his message. Even Jesus, the Son of God, insisted, during the unfolding of his life and the development of his great scheme of redemption, that he must fulfill all righteousness. He went the way of all the servants of God and found his Father at every step.

The history of the church has seen not a few who hoped, by some peculiar religious genius to invent something that would supply God and his message to man. Like the patent office, the religious world is full of inventions which have never worked, though some are never weary of experimenting with them. This is the explanation of theosophy, Christian Science, Spiritualism, Babism, and many other movements created and followed by those who had not found God in ordinary ways along ordinary paths, and they end in pantheism or practical atheism. How different was it with Luther, who when he became a leader of God's people in an hour of darkness, took men by the way

of the ancient well-trodden path of justification by faith, as also with John Wesley, who directed the Methodist host into the path of the witness of the Spirit, through which for centuries God's people had marched towards heaven. And by both God was exalted. Certain is it that if we do not find God by normal processes, we shall not find him by the abnormal. If ever we do find him by other than normal processes, it will be in spite of our methods, out of his great love for us and mercy towards our weaknesses. Our place always is to travel in the way our fathers trod and we shall find God as they did.

> "Our eyes see dimly, till by faith anointed,
> And our blind choosing brings us grief and pain;
> Through Him alone who hath our way appointed
> We find our peace again."

In such an hour we have a vision of God, ourselves, the world, its needs and possibilities. We see God not as an Eastern potentate demanding praise and flattery, sitting idle on his throne, a God who has done something in the past, but ceased from all his labors, the God of Deism, the Allah of Mohammedanism. He becomes to us the most active, the most self-sacrificing of beings, the slave of all, best seen in the Christ girded with the towel, washing the feet of his disciples. It is utterly absurd for any one to worship such a God who does not at the same time feel in himself the moving towards Christian activity, towards Christian service. Indeed we cannot worship God at all unless we have a correspondence in ourselves with him. There is a great tendency to think that we must pre-

serve the dignity and greatness of God. Anything else may be sacrificed but this. A great deal of old-time theology, much of it quite valuable, started here. It is somewhat the attitude of the disciples trying to keep the mothers and children away from their great Master, or again when they seem to feel humiliated both for the Master and themselves that a heathen Syrophenician woman should be crying after them. The hymns of the church present to us a God no more afraid to be touched by the hands of sinful, but penitent men and women than Jesus was, a God who is ever stooping to the humblest needs of humblest men, a God who cannot keep still while his children suffer. We sing:

"O Holy Father, who hast led Thy children
In all the ages, with the fire and cloud,
Through seas dry-shod, through weary wastes bewildering
To Thee, in reverent love, our hearts are bowed.

O Holy Ghost, the Lord and the Life-giver,
Thine is the quickened power that gives increase,
From Thee have flowed, as from a pleasant river,
Our plenty, wealth, prosperity and peace."

Such words as these were written for worship and in the spirit of worship. They were conceived, no doubt, in a time of worship. So shall we think of God when we come to pray, to commune with him, else why come?

His universe must be like himself. There is a reason for the interdependence of all things, of star and star, man and beast, plant and animal, mind and matter, man and God. It is a universe, a oneness, so real

that some men look at it and see nothing but matter, while others look at it and see nothing but spirit; and so we have two schools of philosophers, materialists and idealists. Neither of these schools is right, but both bear testimony to the conviction that there is a real unity. And this is all in perfect accord with the new vision of God. As the words father and mother are keynotes and are decisive of the houses in which we live, and make them different from the other piles of brick and stone which we call mills and stores, so the better thoughts of God transform all around us, and we are in a new world of service, mutual service and love. It is a world far different from a world of evolution with its over-emphasis on the struggle for life, a world in which what Drummond called the struggle for the life of others is everywhere in evidence, because God is in all things, the God who lives for others. This world we see in our hours of worship, just as we see the God of love, of active service. How natural is it for us now, if dominated by selfishness, even religious selfishness, to feel perfectly uncomfortable, not at home. Indeed it is not surprising that everywhere men devoted to selfish ends of money-making and pleasure should seldom be happy. There is a side to this world, that which makes it what it is, which often wholly unconsciously to themselves takes hold upon them. Vast fortunes accumulated at the expense of human good, in the hands of men in no sense Christians, find their way out to ministrations of love and mercy for children, the aged, the suffering.

We see the world, too, far away from the divine

idea and ideal, which God saw in the very beginning, when looking out upon all he had created he saw it to be very good. We see the heart-breaking needs of men. We are like a tender-hearted man, who, sitting in a warm, palatial home at a luxurious meal, should suddenly turn and see the faces of hungry, cold children at the window. Our own blessedness makes the sin and misery of the world appear the blacker. On a day during Christmas week in a great city with ice and snow in the streets, two bare-footed, pale-faced children stood over the grating in the sidewalk of a great toy-store keeping themselves warm with the heat from the basement below, and looking longingly at the wonderful exhibition in the windows. A beautifully gowned woman rode up in her Packard limousine. She was about to enter the store—would she pass the children by? No, she returned, led the children into the store, loaded them down with toys, helped them into her limousine, and for the moment, forgetting her own little ones, drove them to their home to meet the needs there also. There is the church, with its blessed gospel, its beautiful music, its throngs of God's children, the angels hovering near, Jesus with hands held out to bless, and all around are the miserable, the wretched, the blind, the naked. The blessedness of the hour with God brings to us also a sense of oppression, which leads us almost to demand of God that he let us help.

And withal we have a vision of the possibilities of this world, unsatisfactory as it is just now. On the isle of Patmos, John saw at the climax of his great

vision the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven and the tabernacle of God among men. Never did man look upon such terror and wretchedness as John had beheld on the earth, but even in such a world God could live and make it as the New Jerusalem. A similar scene comes up before us, whenever like John we are in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. What our hearts feel within themselves, in spite of all our sins and infirmities, convinces us that out of other clay like us he can make vessels to honor, that out of stone like us he can make other redeemed forms. The only difference between that marble just hauled into the studio of a Phidias and the marble down in the quarry still—but what a difference—is that the marble in the studio has a chance, and has already had fall on it the shadow of the great artist. Indeed Jesus himself is the ultimate possibility of every human being, and when we see him as we do in every sincere act of worship, our hearts bound with joy in the certainty that we too may be good, and that every other man may be good too. The great preachers have always so assured the sinful and erring. Jesus himself said to the fallen, "Go and sin no more."

We see ourselves, ourselves idealized, what underneath all that is sinful, defective, transient, our real self is. Like men who hunting for some great fresco and at last, cleaning away whitewash and dirt, expose the great picture to view, we by processes, not so slow, but at times instantaneous, open up to our own gaze all that is essential to our humanity—and this comes to pass in seasons of prayer and divine fellowship. There

appear those things which make us human, things essential to our personality, but most important is that without which we cannot and afterwards do not claim to be men, our love for all the race, the impelling of all we have and are to service. Yes, hidden away in the depths of our souls is the cross. To serve is as needful to us now as to eat or to sleep. We say with Jesus, "My meat is to do the will of my Father and to finish his work."

We find a divine plan or program or purpose, and are convinced it can be consummated. We are in a position to understand what it all means, this church, these sacred hours, this worship. Worship at its best will not be merely a season of personal gratification, enjoyment, self-gratulation. The purpose ahead of all religious life is now known to be the giving of God the Father to the world, the opening of the way for his entrance into all life, everywhere, the building of the kingdom in men and among men. We are almost overwhelmed with the discovery that the church misses the whole meaning of its existence, yes its very right to exist at all, when it overlooks or forgets these things. Either to forget them or to overlook them is quite possible, for we may be regularly at church and loyal to it as an organization without any sort of worship. We sing great hymns and hear great sermons and contribute all that is required, but God is absent from it all, and the things we do are ends in themselves, satisfactory if only they are done well. There is no end beyond this for the church at large. A few unusual men may have special calls to a large task, to the city

slums, to the sick room, to the people in non-Christian lands. But how can any one kneel in sincere adoration before the cross, whether present in actual symbol or not, without having its truth burn its way into his very life as the interpretation of all that goes on in any sort of relation to that temple where he kneels? You know the story of the painter who went to church to see certain types of women for his somewhat sensuous brush, and was moved, as he looked upon the various emblems of the sacrifice of Jesus, to give his brush to spread abroad the story of this great love.

The chief reason for the weakness of the church to-day is its frequent disloyalty to the very reason for its existence. No institution can very long prosper that does not remain true to its fundamental principles—a nation calling itself a republic when it is not a republic, boasting of liberty when it has no true liberty, boasting of its homes, when divorces are ground out by the hundreds every court day; an education which claims for itself the training of the whole man, but fails to recognize the demands of the spiritual nature. These are but illustrations of a universal truth, that the prerequisite to the success of any worthy movement or organization is faithful and persistent adherence to all that made the movement or the organization necessary. Abraham Lincoln, speaking of slavery in our country, said that no people could remain half slave and half free, words the truth of which we have all come to admit. How fully and even carefuly we follow in the wake of this great principle in material things! Destruction is in the violation of any law or purpose in the

physical world. The whole of progress consists in finding out the law and in slavish obedience to it when found out. What would have become of Jesus himself, if he had at any moment forgotten his own announcement of the purpose of his coming, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many," even though he might have retained all other qualifications and all other ambitions and remained a great miracle worker, a great preacher, with marked power of leadership? He would have been enrolled with men like Epictetus and Plato and other teachers, but the foundations of his kingdom would have crumbled before he had begun the superstructure.

The forces in religion which ought to be inspiringly helpful when used in accord with the divine plan, become distinctly hurtful when not so used. How unattractive, ever repulsive, is an intensely religious life when it is no more than this. The Master has given us in his picture of the Pharisee and the publican a striking glimpse at one type of such a character. There stands the Pharisee, perfectly satisfied with himself because he performs with exactness certain rounds of religious duty, willing not to develop his manhood any further, contemptuous towards the poor publican whom he is glad to see just because it gives God and others a chance to know by contrast how splendid a personality he is. Jesus has held up before our gaze another illustration in the elder brother of the Prodigal Son, who, just because he has violated no law of decency and has remained near to the place of safety in the father's

house, is unwilling to recognize the tie of brotherhood, and sneeringly calls the returning wanderer, "This, thy son." The things that were good in this elder son's life have hardened his heart, destroyed his love and tenderness, and make us almost wish he had gone away with that younger man, if only like him he had come back sorrowful for the things he had done. We have another example in the priest and Levite of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Here a man belonging to a heterodox group can see the sufferings and hear the groans of the wounded man while those most intimately connected with the best religious life of their day could not, and could not simply because they were religious, intensely religious and no more. With them sacrifice was more than mercy. There is here no defense of irreligion and heterodoxy, but there is a condemnation of mere religion and mere orthodoxy. We are quite familiar in our modern days with the refusal of the church to lend its aid to needful social movements, just because it has so much religion to attend to. Let us stay near to our altars, in these sacred undefiled places, and not turn aside to the cries of the women and children in the factories and the men in the mines, the political corruption which protects dens of iniquity which seize upon our young men almost as soon as they confess faith in Christ.

This hour of true worship is an hour of joy, but it is a joy in the thought of making ready for the real purpose of our existence. Here is the preparation and we are eager for the service. Like our Lord, we have a baptism to be baptized with, and are straitened until

it be accomplished. We are reminded of what the seventh earl of Shaftsbury, that man who out of his wealth and social prestige had done so much for the down-trodden poor of England, said when told he would soon be in heaven, "How can I go to heaven, while so many poor in England still need my help?" How impressive are the words of Jesus when he says to those men who had been under his tender protection in closest communion with him, "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves." If their fellowship with Jesus had done anything for them, their hearts must have bounded with joy. In every act of worship which brings us into touch with Christ, with God, we are bound to hear, "Behold I send you forth." God is eternally going forth, and all who have loved him have caught his spirit and gone forth. A thousand souls sing hymns and say prayers in some great cathedrals every Lord's Day. How marvelous would it be, if they might each day so worship that they might hear the voice of God, even with gladness, which sends them out to some great task.

When there is not a special call to special work, there may be, and very often is, a new call to our daily task as a service as divine and sacred, as done ultimately not for ourselves but for others. We have an illustration in the reply of the cobbler, when his pastor asked him what he was doing for the kingdom of God, "I am mending these shoes for a school-boy so they will not leak," not mending them because he was to earn a dollar. God needs carpenters and blacksmiths and teachers as surely as he needs deaconesses

and missionaries. The development of his world on its material side is an essential part of his purpose. If he calls at all, he calls for tillers of the soil, for those who make and sell garments, and all the rest of the workers. Calls come from labor unions, employment agencies, employers, and for wholly selfish reasons men and women hear and obey the call to a work which as far as is possible is entirely detached from connection with the cross, redemption, the kingdom of heaven. It is indeed more than a benediction for a man at his daily task to know that he is a fellow-worker with the saints and heroes of all ages, the preachers, reformers, martyrs. A new touch will be given to each act of labor, new thoughts will fill his soul, and he will do his bit to acomplish the victory of the truth and the right. In turn the work will be a call to God, a struggling towards God, towards giving expression to the thought of God. The prayer of the heart for aid is spoken through the toil. The same energy which shows itself in the works of God, as they struggle towards perfection through pain, is evident in the works of men, as they also strive to reach a divine ideal. Under such conditions one may indeed adore God, for there is the conviction that all that is done is obedience to God. But if it be supposed that life for the most part is my undertaking, under merely human regulations, certain it is that worship in any large sense will be impossible, for my obligation, my adoration is to a boss, to a capitalistic system, to the distributer of the wages.

The daily task is the material with which we give expression to the dreams or ideals of worship. The

season of worship will give a sight of these more or less material things as being thus shaped. And there is a great need for this, for most of us see it all from the standpoint of bread and meat, ambition, and power. Recently a young woman, who had spent twenty-thousand dollars on the training of her remarkable voice, gave herself to the service of God in evangelistic work. This was quite noble and heroic, and many others might wisely do the same thing. But the question might very well be asked, if she might not have continued to sing before great audiences, to entertain them and to make for herself a livelihood, if these had not been made the supreme or final motives, and back of every concert had been the call of God. Does not God need men and women to do in a noble way what the bird with his sweet voice does, to add what the sunset glow adds to the monotony of our days of weariness? A very successful banker some years ago gave up his lucrative business and surrendered an accumulated fortune, in order that he might travel about the country as a layman preaching the kingdom. Again, it is not wrong, nor does it in any way discredit this rich man's sacrifice, to ask if he might not have remained in the banking business as a call from God and to the glory of God. There is great need for godly, generous men of wealth, honest bankers, who think first of service, service to God and to their fellows. It is conceivable that a bank might be so run as to be like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and that an angelic well-trained voice might remind one of

heaven, even when not for the moment used in hymns or anthems of the church.

Socialism, bolshevism, and the like, are seeking the entire reorganization of the world, especially on its economic side, hoping to get rid of the menial, enslaving influence of work, as also to get much more of a material sort out of it. But what is after all needed is the divine reorganization, that reorganization or retouching which changes clouds into rainbows and the dull earth into a green sward. What the soul unconsciously demands is God himself, looking out from the midst of business as from between the wings of the cherubim. In some homes the piano is a piece of lumber sadly in the way, especially on the moving days, and in others the violin may become a plaything for the children for all kinds of imaginary purposes. How different if Josef Hoffman or Mischa Elman were there! The story is told of an old violinist who had come on bad days, that, walking down the street dejected, he watched some dirty-faced children playing on a lot with a violin which he discovered to be a Stradivarius. He stood it as long as he could, and finally grabbing the instrument, he hurried away with it to his lonely room, and stretching strings on it, played all night long. Driven by his conscience, he returned it to the wretched house where he had found it, and playing on it, stirred to love of music and cleanliness the people to whom it belonged. This life of ours needs Christ's hands; that is all. The things which before seemed worthless or even in the way, give music to our souls and others. Certainly we shall not make

this a satisfactory world by simply tinkering with its material side and no more. If the efforts to drive God and all spiritual things out should succeed, this will be indeed a scene of despair. "Without God and without hope"—two terrific thoughts are these together, but they must be found together always, if the visible things and they only are worth while.

The aim of the Gospel is redemption, and that redemption not of humanity merely, as though man must be snatched as a brand from the burning and the fire be allowed to burn on to total destruction. No; all that is must be redeemed. All things are to be reconciled to God. The groaning creation waits for the adoption. In Jesus Christ, through Jesus Christ, and unto Jesus Christ were all things created. They must needs be put back again and kept in their proper place. Do not deserts call upon us to make them fertile fields? Are not rivers beseeching us to harness their energies in the service of mankind? Did not the oceans for long cry in vain that the narrow isthmuses ought not to keep them apart? In like manner, the marvelous forces utilized in manufacture and trade have begged to be made safe for even the weakest, until there should be no hurt or destruction there. It is a most thrilling experience if in the presence of a divine glory as dazzling as that which Isaiah saw, kneeling in the temple, some weary son of toil hears a summons to go back to his place, perhaps a very lowly one, into the conditions which at times have almost robbed him of his faith. No knight of the Round Table surely ever felt more honored in his task. The crusader's dream

was small compared with his. This is the true home missionary. In some respects he reminds us of the pioneer of early days, riding through almost impenetrable forests, and swimming swollen streams, and facing wild beasts, to carry the Word of God and the knowledge of Jesus Christ. At the foot of the cross, the inspiration for his task is given him.

A man may be so filled with God that every increase in his business but adds divine energy to his life, just as the increase in the coil of the wire multiplies the strength of the electric current which passes through it. Prosperity is then not a curse. Wealth may become an agency for righteousness. If only a whole nation were like this, it would be safe to lay more stress on material development, on railroads, mines, and ships. Paul teaches us that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. It is perfectly legitimate for us, with the recollection of Paul's broad view of this great gospel, to think of all kinds of power as harnessed by the cross for human good. So may we think of a redeemed world, becoming a force for human redemption, and increasingly so with the increase of its development and the enlargement of its resources. Such possibilities come only to those who have lingered long in the presence of God, who have heard very distinctly the call, who have God's ideal for the world stamped indelibly on their hearts. In a recent magazine article, we have described to us most graphically the climb of a multitude of Hindoos, through snow and ice and jagged rocks, by most dangerous pathways, to a Sivaite shrine, where the bitter cold of the Himalayas

kept the water frozen into the obscene symbol of their worship. Shall we not climb the heights of fellowship with God, where seeing nothing but the cross of Jesus as the symbol of the divine will, we shall go back to the world of daily toil to make it effective there?

There is a call to service growing out of the personal contact with a God of sacrificial service revealed in the cross of Jesus Christ. Undoubtedly in our best hours of worship we think of this God. Outside we think of wisdom, power, glory, and perhaps go so far as to attribute selfishness to him. Here it is another God, who gave his only Son, who weeps over human sorrow and sin, who says, "How can I give thee up?" and points us to Jesus, when we desire an answer to our fears, "This is my beloved Son, hear him." In the very act of worship all that is noble in us goes out after that cross. We are lifted up to that kind of an ideal. It is stamped on our very souls. You know how we are told that St. Francis lived in such loving contact with the crucified one, that the stigmata, the five wounds of Jesus, were reproduced in his body. These were external marks, but better are those other stigmata marked on the inner life, and these must come to all who live in loving, sympathetic contact with the Man of Galilee. It is not the ordinary gaze upon the cross, even of an admiring sort, that brings the transformation. It is well known that painters who have given us famous paintings of the crucifixion have, at that very time, been living in sin and selfishness. There is needed the adoration by the whole man, an ecstatic reverence; all that is in us must center itself in our

rapturous gaze in which all else is swallowed up—and this is worship. How numerous, almost commonplace are the illustrations growing out of relationships wholly human—of husbands and wives becoming strangely alike in looks, in tones of voice, in ideas; pupils imitating unconsciously even the defects of their teachers, as when Neander's students carried one shoulder higher than the other; young preachers getting the very voice and gestures of some great preacher very influential in his day; children whose very walk at a distance down the street tells you who are their parents. We are reminded that they took knowledge of the disciples that they had been with Jesus and learned of him. No doubt they saw traces of his personality in the men who had been walking in such loving fellowship with him. How natural it seems to us when we are told that the primitive peoples, when they are led by the missionaries into the Christian life, imitate their every movement, and mode of dress, and manner of living down to the minutest detail. It reminds us of the reproduction in the baby's face of the mother's smiles and the movement of the mother's lips.

There are travesties of all this in the seeking of pain and sacrifice for their own sake. Monks in the past, ambitious to have the stigmata like St. Francis on their bodies, have marked them there, painful as the experience was, with their own hands. Men and women have gone through long vigils and fastings that they might seem to keep company with Jesus in his forty days of abstinence from food. Others in days of self-denial appointed by the church have been careful to do with-

out the things which they liked the most in order thus to be the more like their Lord. Indeed the cross has grown beautiful to us. We put it on our church spires, wear it bedecked with jewels on our bodies, weave it into our poetry and music and make it central in our pictures. Pain and suffering and self-denial are only the accompaniments of the real life of service, and are of value only as they may indicate the depth of our devotion and the largeness of our service. Jesus and his disciples were criticized because they did not fast as did the disciples of John, and Jesus would not endure the cross until the proper time came, the time when he could no longer do his work without Gethsemane and Calvary. We cannot help admiring in a degree those who have seen such beauty in a life like the Master's that they have dressed themselves in the livery of it. But the call is to service to every form of human need, most of all to the needs of the soul, and this may lead to a season of feasting as in the case of the Master's visit to the home of Zaccheus. But no sacrifice, no pain can be so great as to excuse us from performing the service, whatever it may be.

The sincere worship of God, apart from any immediate vision of the cross or the Victim slain there, brings forth in our lives the realization that we have some special task to perform for the world. It is seen in some of the great teachers of the ethnic religions. Numerous as were their errors, and defective and even at times harmful as were their ministrations, they longed for God, and, with the searching for him, out of their hearts invariably went their wish that they might

do something for their brothers in the flesh. We see the same thing yet more evidently in the great heroes and saints of the Old Testament, in the wonderful experience of Isaiah determined now to do what he can for his people of unclean lips, and in the strange story of Hosea and his faithless wife, who as he cast himself almost in despair upon God, had waked up in him the determination to do what he could for that Israel, which, like his own wife, had been untrue to God. As the ideal musical without calls forth from its hiding place in us the musical within, so the ideal servant without awakes from its slumber the servant within us, that servant which after all is our true self. Indeed the very atmosphere about us is surcharged with the idea, the very music of bird and brook has in it this keynote; the movements of all things find here their harmony and order. If we but hush all other sounds and turn away from all other sights, we must realize ourselves to be under the spell of that which has been eternally true, but which in later days found its clearest expression in the cross. Here is the one far-off divine event, to which the whole creation is moving, and we are in the great Gulf Stream of loving service which issues from under the throne of God and sweeps the universe around. It is almost impossible to resist its steady strong movement. Unconsciously to a large extent, and yet most certainly, the world is affected by this omnipresent, ever working God of service.

Multitudes of so-called Christians, indulging in their sense of security through faith in Jesus Christ, remind us of the disciples as they go to sleep in the garden

while their Master faces the greatest task ever undertaken by God or man. It would appear to have been impossible for them to have rested, until Jesus had given them an immediate part in the work of redemption. Living as we do in constant contact with the God of the cross, the God of service, and in a universe where all the forces operate under the command of such a God, we must fight against this supreme idea of love, unless we submit to it with all that it demands. Such battling does go on, and the results are seen in an enfeebled religious life and experience in individuals and in the church. Here is to be found the central place of obedience to God, and through this obedience God and all his resources become ours. But disobedience here makes impossible the bestowal upon us by God of his abounding grace. On the other hand, the more any church or any individual may do for the great needy world in utter self-forgetfulness, the more rapidly will the church grow in all those things of which a church is as a rule ambitious, and the more glorious will be the individual life. Said Jesus, "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."

In our worship we have fellowship with a goodly company who have heard the call to some special service and have obeyed. Some may be in that church where at that very time we sing and pray. They are in other

churches and denominations of Christians in our own land. Thousands are engaged in many forms of missionary endeavor in other lands. A multitude that no man can number who toiled in the kingdom of God and have entered upon their reward gather with us, for

"One family we dwell in Him,
One church, above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream, of death;

One army of the living God,
To His command we bow,
Part of His host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now."

The eleventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews gives us quite a list of those who filled the places assigned by God, and triumphantly lived the life of faith. What names and faces of Christian saints come before us out of the past remote and recent, until our conception of the communion of saints means vastly more than the Holy Catholic Church. Here are Polycarp and Ignatius and Athanasius on down to Wesley and Livingstone and Carey. We grow strangely ashamed of our ease, our mere enjoyment of our religion, our very clothing and our food so much better than any of them had. Our longings for large comfort and larger wealth cease. We see them toiling in city slums, on mountain side, bearing the message to kings and governors, suffering the loss of all things in order to be co-workers with their Lord and we beg for a place by their side.

Not merely does the voice of the crowd move us as by some hypnotic spell. It is the ideal life and character

of one man taking hold of the same elements in another man and awaking them to consciousness and activity. It is the giving of each to the other of certain essential personal traits, as illustrated in Paul's figure of the body with its many members each ministering helpfully to all the rest. Here is one great value in "the assembling of ourselves together." There is something supernatural in the influence in this large sense of one life upon another, as supernatural, because it is of the same nature, as the influence of the life of God on a human soul. Miraculous is the power by which a mother reproduces herself in her son or daughter, by which a preacher lifts his people to his holy life, a general turns an army of weaklings and cowards into men of courage and strength. It was said of a certain very noble man, that men who proposed to live sinful lives dared not go near him, for fear they might be forced by his strange influence to give up their sins. What would happen to any of us if we should live for but a few days in a company of missionaries from the various fields of the world in loving admiring fellowship? Almost irresistible would be the inclination to continue in an association like this whithersoever it might lead. Even more influential is the unseen man. In his case also it was expedient that he should go away, so that his larger self, detached from all that is material and sensuous, might move upon the souls of others. These unseen lives are more real and inspiring to the sincere worshipers than the throng, comfortable and well-dressed, seated in the pews. They call us with an eloquence like that of David Livingstone, in words he

left written on a page near where he knelt dead in his tent, "All I can say in my solitude is, may Heaven's rich blessing come down on every one—American, English, Turk—who will help to heal this open sore of the world." David Brainerd, after four years of labor amid indescribable discomforts and self-denials, died before he was thirty years of age, and it is said the simple record of his short life has influenced more persons to give themselves to mission work than any other biography. These are our holy associations as we kneel in worship.

When even a few—the Master's two or three—assemble for holy and unselfish purposes, it is the great essentials of our humanity which gather together. We may meet for political, or literary ends, or for the purpose of pleasure, entertainment, or fun. Here we meet on higher ground, the ground on which all that is secondary submits to that which is fundamental. Whatever be the subject engaging our attention, the assembly for the purpose of considering it strengthens its hold upon us, and will probably demand of us some form of expression. The world has fully learned the importance of this truth. We have clubs and other organizations for all sorts of aims both good and evil. A music study club will keep up the interest in the higher class of music. A political party, even in face of defeat, will continue to hold its meetings, to consider its principles and restore confidence in them. Certain social elements in a community will preserve the integrity of the refinement and culture for which they stand. The assembly in the church should do the same for

the central things of the gospel, the cross and the consecration to it. But is it not true that a multitude of things secondary interfere? Here are the societies, the mere raising of money in order to secure a certain sum, the preserving of our decency, the consideration of the rivalry of some church near by, belonging to our own or some other denomination. Where the great eternal truths are considered in hymn and prayer and sermon and in the sacred fellowship, every hour that brings God's children together should witness the surrender of worshipers to the call of God. There should be no lack of workers for the ministry and other fields of labor. The present distressing situation shows how merely formal, how unreal, how void of the essential things are our seasons of prayer and communion in God's house. Do we indeed see the saints of all the ages bearing as they do "the brands (stigmata) of the Lord Jesus"? We sing

> "We are traveling home to God
> In the way our fathers trod."

There is danger that we shall think of this only in the light of what to them was orthodoxy or ideal ecclesiastical method. If this is all these ancient leaders of the church can do for us, they may be more of an injury to us than a blessing. Their orthodoxy and their method were simply means through which they gave expression to the eternal truths, means worth no more than the language through which we express our ideas, needing to be re-expressed or even translated with each new age. No, the way in which they trod,

the only way worthy to be trodden by redeemed men, was the way of the cross, the way of sacrifice, the way of service. In their day they disagreed, they even quarreled about things which after all were small, as did Wesley with Whitefield and Toplady and Cennick, as did Luther with Zwingli, as did Kingsley with Newman, but these men walked in the way that Jesus walked, and they alike inspire us and call us to the heights, where they were transfigured with Jesus, as also to many lowly depths, where they so efficiently, in the spirit of the Master ministered to spiritual diseases which were supposed to be incurable. And these men all had their call straight from the lips of God, with whom in perfect independence and liberty they had communion, along with many whom they admired, who had found God in other ages. They made mistakes. They often seemed to think that their Arminianism, Calvinism, consubstantiation, ecclesiasticism, were essential things, but it was through these, often in spite of these, they found God and their road to service and the cross. The trouble with their followers is that they too frequently are so busy with the non-essentials, they miss the essential things and even fail to see the heroes who lived so near the crucified Christ.

It quite often comes to pass that when we go out into the world's concerns, we begin to distrust the vision and the call as impracticable. The hours of exaltation ought to control. Not the vision, but the world, is at fault, and the world must be made, so far as we are concerned, to conform to the vision. Our best moments must be the norm by which all is to be tested.

If anything submits slowly, so much the worse for that thing. But it is a well known fact, though we may not often think of it, that the greatest deeds are frequently performed on the spur of the moment, or as the result of decisions thus made, and from which it is impossible honorably afterwards to recede. It is an evidence of unusual character and consecration, when in face of temptation and worldly ambition and opportunity, one follows the dream indulged in away from what men believe to be the realities of life. We read statements made of late that men who had felt a call to the ministry and had entered upon their calling with high hopes have withdrawn, in the face of small salaries and high cost of living. Missionaries, sent forth with the blessing of throngs of admiring friends, have sometimes suffered what was akin to disillusionment, as soon as they saw the people and the conditions in whose midst they must labor. Leaders in reforms grow weary of their task, when they find the public slow to respond to their appeals, and it may be are discouraged by the pulpit, the chief creator of public sentiment. Was the vision an *ignis fatuus,* a mirage? Was the call the creation of their own fancy? Why make a sacrifice for nothing? It was fortunate for Paul that he did not have to go back at once, after his experience on the road to Damascus, to face his old employers of the Sanhedrin, that he went off to the quietness of Arabia to have other visions, and to have deepened the conviction that he had a call to the greatest work ever assigned a human being.

We must go back to the vision. No doubt God will

repeat it for us in the very place where we first received it. We can verify it, look at it on every side, see the hand of God in it. In a way these visions and calls of God are eternal. They are always there awaiting us, if meant for us, and if they are genuine we shall always find them, if we seek them. It is true, as Bushnell has expressed it in a great sermon, that every man's life is a special plan of God. But what is the value of this fact, unless God has made known that plan? And there it is ever before us if we sincerely desire to know. There is the vision. This is the call. If we keep it before us, we shall become convinced at last it is meant for us. Certain it is that we shall never find this out by running away from it, by living in the world, by placing ourselves in positions which must blind our eyes to the vision and stop our ears to the call. Many of the details of the plan for our lives will be worked out after we have put our hands to the work appointed to us. Like Livingstone, we may know we are to be missionaries and give our lives to some Board in Christ's name. But we may find out that we did not choose the best field. We shall see the plan in all that is essental to it, although the details may be absent.

When we have taken up our task in obedience to some heavenly vision, we should let God shed a new light upon it continually. We know what the sun can do with the world, how it hangs rainbows in the clouds and in the very midst of the terrors of Niagara, how it makes glorious in the west the approaches of the night, how it chases the darkness in the morning and

makes splendid the mountain-peaks, which in the haze of the night looked like grim spectres. God can make us see in those slum children in the city at home and in those negroes and yellow folks in the foreign lands his own dear children, until they assume all the beauty and attractiveness of Raphael's angels in the Sistine Madonna, or the glory of Moses and Elias in that same painter's transfiguration. We shall see our work, not detached, carried on alone, but a part of God's great plan. We shall know ourselves in partnership with him. The little plan of our lives now grows to be very great and important. And this will be true of our secular work as well.

> "Thine is the loom, the forge, the mart,
> The wealth of land and sea;
> The world of science and of art,
> Revealed and ruled by Thee."

We must obtain God's estimate of the things which drew us from the vision and the call. These are the passing show not one fragment of which shall remain. They cover something substantial, eternal, divine, but this is the very thing which we miss. It is said that when Napoleon saw the pyramids, he asked some one standing near how long a marble statue would last, and then how long a painting, and when in each case the answer came, he replied with a sneer, "And yet we call that immortality." The mere money-making, glory of achievement, dazzle of beauty and of pleasure have no connection with God's eternal program. They are like the chaff which the wind drives away from the wheat or the marble dust which gathers about the door

of the artist's studio. They are to be carted away and dumped by God on the great ashheap of his universe. Jesus has left us his estimate of all such living in the fearful question asked the rich fool: "This night thy soul shall be required of thee. Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"

When we come to God for worship, then we do see again the vision and hear the call anew, then do we see the plan God has for us. Then is it that life's dull tasks are lighted with the glory of the divine face. Then do we behold the utter worthlessness of things we have so highly prized. A soul in constant touch with God cannot go astray, cannot miss his calling, cannot devise a plan of his own as a substitute for God's plan for him. He may hear a call to a hard piece of work, but he will feel confident that God's grace is sufficient, and he will be filled with mingled zest and joy.

THE END

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